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SEALANT GLOSSARY

The following information was provided by Baltimore Chapter member, Robert N. Reigel, in cooperation with the Tremco Manufacturing Company.

**Adhesion:** The property of a coating or sealant which measures its ability to stick or bond to the surface with which it is in contact.

**Application Life:** The period within which a multi-part sealant can be effectively applied to a joint by the recommended method. It is timed from the completion of mixing, and refers to a particular temperature.

**Back-Up:** A material placed into a joint, primarily to control the depth of the sealant. Could be a closed cell polyethylene rod, open or closed cell foam, or a bond breaker tape.

**Base:** The general composition of a compound, such as vegetable oil, polysulfide, acrylic, silicone, etc. Also, in a two part compound, the major unit of the compound to which a curing agent or accelerator is added before use.

**Bleeding:** The absorption of oil or vehicle from a compound into an adjacent porous surface and different from migration which is the spreading or creeping of oil or vehicle from a compound out onto an adjacent non-porous surface.

**Bond Breaker:** A film or thin strip material applied to the back of a joint to prevent sealant adhesion, not required if a suitable back-up has been used.

**Catalyst:** A material which markedly speeds up the cure or reaction of another substance when added in minor quantities.

**Caulk:** To fill cracks or crevices, especially around windows. Also refers to low and medium performance joint materials.

**Chemical Cure:** A change in properties of a material due to polymerization, or vulcanization, which may be affected by heat, catalysts, exposure to the atmosphere, or combination of these.

**Closed Cell:** In gaskets or joint backing, a cellular composition in which there is a predominance of non-interconnecting cells.

**Cohesion:** The state in which the particles of an adhesive or sealant are held together.

**Compatible:** Two or more substances which can be mixed or blended without separating, reacting, or affecting the transparency of the material.

**Compatibility:** The capability of materials to be in contact indefinitely without any adverse effect on either. \*\*\*\*COMPATIBILITY DOES NOT IMPLY ADHESION.



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**Cure:** The change of a sealant from a plastic to an elastic state by a chemical reaction. Solvent-containing sealants may show similar effects by solvent loss without chemical reaction.

**Curing Agent:** One part of a two-part product which when added to the base will cause the base compound to set up chemically by a reaction between the two parts.

**Curing Time:** The time required to complete the chemical reaction of a product to reach its final physical form as a result of the chemical reaction.

**Durometer:** An instrument for measuring the relative hardness of materials such as rubber. Also, the term often used (loosely) as a synonym for relative hardness. Durometers are of several proprietary types, one of the most common being the Shore, type "A". On the scale of this instrument, which is graduated from 0 (softest) to 100 (hardest,) a faucet washer or rubber flooring has a value of 90 and a rubber band has a value of 40. Sealants generally have a value of about 30 after initial cure.

**Initial Set:** In reference to a mastic compound, the stage in drying or curing when the surface becomes sufficiently firm to be unmarked when touched with a finger.

**Sealant:** Compound used to fill and seal a joint, as contrasted to a sealer which is a liquid used to seal porous surfaces. Generally refers to high performance types of joint materials.

**Shear:** Strain put on a compound between two surfaces when there is a slipping movement of two surfaces, parallel to and in opposite directions along the length of the joint.

**Shelf Life:** The length of time that a packaged material such as sealants or adhesives can be stored and remain suitable for use.

**Skin Bead:** A thin application of a sealant or caulk. Skin beads are undesirable and represent one of the major causes of sealant failure.

**Stress Relaxation:** Reduction in initial stress due to creep under sustained deformation.