
Silicones Simplifies

Although there are sealants of many differing chemical bases now available, Silicone products are still by far the most popular, mainly due to their versatility and adaptability. With a Vast array of different type's available; Silicone sealants can look confusing area to even the most experienced user. There are however important difference between many products in terms of quality, application possibilities, toolability, cures speed, flexibility and adhesion.

Adding o the confusion are many phrases and specifications used to describe the characteristics of varying Silicone Sealants, some of which are not always relevant to selecting the right product for the job and some of which are downright confusing. To try and give the average user better understanding of the different types of Silicone Sealants please read on:

Curing Type:

There are two primary curing methods.

*ACETOXY denotes a product that cure by reaction with moisture in the air that gives off an odour of ACETIC ACID (Vinegar). Acetoxy cure types **should not be used when they will be primarily in contact with alkaline substrates (such as concrete).**

*NEUTRAL refers to products that cure by a system of cross linkers that, when activated by exposure to moisture in the air, give off almost odorless byproducts (mainly alcohol).

Modulus:

It is a calculation of stress and strain measurement of the cured sealant, but best can be explained in terms of the hardness or softness of the sealant. High modulus type has a higher tensile strength and less elasticity and is harder to the touch than low modulus types. Which have lower tensile strength and more elasticity. Most and high modulus products are based on acetoxy cure systems, where most low modulus products are based on neutral systems, although there are exceptions.

Elasticity:

The elastic recovery of a sealant also referred to as movement accommodation refer to the percentage it will expand and then contract back to its original form. Elastic recovery varies depending upon formulations but in general high modulus. Acetoxy cure type has a lower elasticity (maximum, 25% movement accommodation) where low modulus neutral cure type have a higher elasticity (up to 50% movement accommodation).

When selecting the correct product for the job of elastic the recovery is the key factor, for example, the movement required of a sealant around the PVC windows frame will much greater than the one used to seal around the kitchen worktop.

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