



Generic material specifications to promote the use of recycled materials.

The first of a series of material specifications aimed at developing the usage of recycled material primarily in the automotive sector is now available in its draft form, for observation and comment.

The objective is to create a portfolio of specifications covering the majority of plastic materials ideally suited for the inclusion of post-consumer recyclate.

The need for these specifications has been identified by the Automotive Task Force of the British Plastics Federation (BPF) and work carried out by the 'Consortium for Automotive Recycling' (CARE).

Legislative and environmental pressure on the automotive sector has increased the desire by motor manufacturers to include recycled materials in the construction of new vehicles. However, even with this desire as a driving force, the incorporation and growth in recyclate usage has faltered. Many barriers have been encountered within the supply chain as a result of perceptions of inconsistent quality, inadequate volumes of supply, potential negative cost implications and from a lack of commitment to deliver the product.

Work has demonstrated that given the correct quality procedures these perceptions are generally unfounded.

However, an issue has been identified with communication and understanding between the different sectors in this particular supply chain, who historically have had limited interaction. Namely, the automotive sector and the plastics recycling industry. The former, have been operating to high quality standards of engineering and compliance with strict legislative requirements imposed on their products. Whilst the latter have supplied to markets that have traditionally not specified such stringent requirements in order to meet product specification.

Basic misunderstandings have been observed in that suppliers of recycled plastics have failed to comprehend the need for the depth and detail of specification required by material engineers, compounders and converters. Whilst this issue has not been helped by a lack of consistency between the specifications issued by the individual manufacturers.

The compilation of this portfolio aims to redress this problem and improve understanding throughout the relatively underdeveloped market for recyclate.

The specifications have the intention to:

- Identify the grades and types of materials used and the typical applications where they can be used.
- List the performance criteria for each material, the test to be used, limits of acceptance and most importantly the reason for the parameter being requested and its importance.

It is hoped that eventually all motor manufacturers will adopt and endorse these specifications as being the standard by which recycled grades of material are used by them. Equally it is important that the recycling industry can supply material in sufficient volumes meeting these specifications at costs not exceeding the equivalent virgin grades.

If you should have any comments or observations about this first draft specification please use the CARE Website enquiry form.

Issue date: April 28th 2000