

PVC – Issues in Recycling

PVC is produced using “*plasticisers (mainly phthalates) and stabilizers in rather high quantities.*”¹ These additives have confounded the development of effective post-consumer PVC recycling programs. The vinyl industry stresses that PVC materials are technically recyclable, and industry spokesmen point to the fact that a large percentage of pre-consumer PVC is recycled by the industry. However, pre-consumer PVC wastes are only a small fraction of the total PVC waste stream.² According to the industry’s own estimates, less than 0.2% of the 15 billion pounds of PVC manufactured in the U.S. each year enter post-consumer recycling streams.³

The Association of Post-Consumer Plastic Recyclers declared in 1998 that PVC recycling efforts were a failure, and that PVC should be considered a contaminant in streams of recyclable plastic.⁴ In 1999, the American Plastics Council also stated that post-consumer recycling of PVC films is “...*not cost-effective at this time.*”⁵ Microsoft noted in a press release that “*PVC has the lowest recycling rate of the major plastic resins. At present, most community recycling facilities in the U.S. do not accept PVC.*”⁶

References Cited

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