

Acrylic Properties

Clear plastic or acrylic is a useful material that resembles glass, but has properties that make it superior to glass in many ways. Easily available brands of high-grade acrylic include poly cast, Lucite and Plax glass. Two basic types of acrylic are extruded and cell cast. Extruded type of acrylic or "continuous cast" acrylic is made by a less expensive process is softer and can scratch easier and may contain impurities while cell cast acrylic is a higher quality acrylic and U.S. domestic cell cast is a good choice for applications that require the best. Cell cast acrylic is often manufactured to lesser standards.

Acrylic can be used to make various products like shower doors, bath enclosures, windows and skylights. Acrylic is preferred over glass for many reasons. Firstly it is many times stronger than glass, making it much more impact resistant and therefore safer. Generally speaking falling against an acrylic shower door will not likely break it. Also baseballs that crash through glass windows will, in most cases, bounce off acrylic windows. Also acrylic is a better insulator. It insulates better than glass, potentially saving on heating bills. Second great advantage of acrylic is that it is only half as heavy as glass. Thus working with acrylic becomes much easier. Also it can be sawed, whereas glass must be scored. In addition to the above properties acrylic is the clearest material known. It has a transparency rate of ninety three percent. Even very thick glass will have a green tint, while acrylic remains clear.

Another property of acrylic plastic is its ability to be shaped. An example of getting shaped is a bow front aquarium. Also there are no seams in acrylic structures, such as chemical welding at the molecular level actually "melts" seams into one piece of solid material indeed seams that are welded and polished are invisible. Some people have misconceptions about acrylic. They say that acrylic turns yellow, brittle and cracks over time. This can happen with very cheap forms of plastic but it is not so with acrylic. Fighter planes have acrylic bubble-tops. Windows of airplane are also made of acrylic. If proper care is taken then acrylic remains new looking regardless of age or exposure to sun.

Few people worry that acrylic scratches too easily, but unlike glass, scratches can be easily buffed out of acrylic. The only disadvantages on acrylic are that it is more expensive than glass, and if exposed to a direct flame it will melt and eventually burn. These days acrylic is used more than ever imagined. Speaking on a general note all major public aquariums now build display tanks out of acrylic. Acrylic is found in malls, institutions, prisons, hospitals and commercial buildings.

About the Author

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