

MOLD RESISTANCE OF POLYETHYLENE AND ELASTOMERIC INSULATION PRODUCTS

All polyethylene and elastomeric insulation products offered by Nomaco have been thoroughly tested and shown to be mold resistant. This performance is verified by the “no growth” rating attained when tested in accordance with ASTM G 21 “Practice for Determining Resistance of Synthetic Polymeric Materials to Fungi” and similar tests such as UL 181. Nomaco polyethylene and elastomeric insulation products, sold under the Nomalock, Nomaply, Imcolock, Imcosheet, therma-cel, ArcticFlex and FlexTherm brand name, achieves this performance level through a combination of intrinsic physical properties and well-conceived chemistry.

Polyethylene and elastomeric insulation’s key physical properties are a result of their closed cell structure, which resists moisture, and a smooth surface skin that resists dirt accumulation. For mold to actively grow, it requires three components: moisture, warmth and a food source. If this chain is broken, mold cannot propagate. By resisting moisture, Nomaco polyethylene and elastomeric insulation products are inherently mold-resistant. Any mold that could grow is confined to limited areas as closed cell materials resist wicking. Fibrous or open cell materials are not inherently resistant to moisture. They rely on a concentrated moisture vapor barrier (ASJ or foil jacket or surface-applied coating) to resist moisture. If the jacket is damaged (even a pin hole) or the edges are not properly sealed, they are susceptible to moisture intrusion and thus mold growth. Once moisture penetrates, it can wick and involve large areas in the mold growth process.

There is a wide range of chemistries available to evaluate when considering additives to prevent mold growth. Products that contain a “biocide” or “anti-microbial agent” must be very careful with the claims they make. Additives for fungi resistance are usually very different than additives for bacteria resistance. Anti-bacterial agents used in common consumer products that are prone to bacteria, e.g. countertops, tooth brushes, etc., may have no effect on mold resistance. The primary issue with insulation products is fungal, mold and mildew resistance – not bacterial.

Additionally, anti-microbial agents (both anti-bacteria and anti-mold additives) are generally low volatility products. This means they are susceptible to evaporation or decomposition in the manufacturing process. Any additives used in a product must be screened for volatility to be sure they are present in the final product after manufacturing in order to be effective. Typical processing temperatures for closed cell polymeric foam insulation products exceed 300°F. Any additive used must have a thermal stability above the process temperatures. The additive used in all Nomaco polyethylene and elastomeric insulation products is thermally stable above process temperatures and remains effective in the final product.