

Expandable Graphite Flake

Technical Data Sheet 226

Product Overview

GRAFGUARD expandable graphite flake is an intumescent material used as a fire retardant additive in plastics, foams, putties and coatings. Upon exposure to high temperatures, the material expands and forms a graphite char that is more resistant to degradation than the carbon chars formed from typical chemical intumescent. GRAFGUARD material contains no halogenated fire retardant additives, and is manufactured without the lead or chromium that can be found in some other expanding graphite flakes.

Technical Profile

Manufactured from natural graphite flake, the proprietary processing for GRAFGUARD expandable graphite inserts an expansion agent (or intercalant) between the parallel layer planes in the graphite. Beginning at temperatures as low as 160°C, the intercalant degrades to produce gases that force the layer planes apart. The force of this expansion enables ideal application as an intumescent additive for putties, pipe collars and other firestop products. In plastics, foams and coatings, the layer of expanded graphite forms an effective insulating “char” layer that protects the substrate from heat and air and interferes with the migration of decomposition products to the combustion zone.

Onset Temperature

The onset temperature defines the temperature at which a material begins to expand. This expansion is important whether the material is being used as an intumescent agent, or to form a protective heat insulating char layer.

Onset Temperature	Use When	Applications
160°C*	High expansion is required at low temperatures	Intumescent putties, sealants and mats Fire-retardant foams for building insulation, transportation seating
220°C	Mixing, extruding or processing at higher temperatures	Fire-retardant additive in plastics: Polyethylene Polypropylene High-impact polystyrene
250°C	Processing temperatures are high	Fire-retardant additive in plastics: Polyethylene Polypropylene High-impact polystyrene

Notes:

* Lowest onset temperature of any expandable graphite flake available

Expansion Performance

GRAFGUARD flake has been shown to expand up to eight times more than competitive products, exhibiting superior performance even at low temperatures. This high expansion makes it possible to reduce loading levels and improve performance. As the amount of additive is reduced, the probability that the physical properties of the final product will be negatively affected is also reduced. Before expansion, GRAFGUARD particles have a specific volume of about 1.25 cm³/g.

GRAFGUARD Grade	Typical Expansion Volume at 600°C (cm ³ /g)	Mesh	Use When	Mean Particle Size
160-50	250	65% on 50 mesh nominal	Maximum expansion is desired	350 micron typical
220-50	200			
160-80	200	65% on 80 mesh nominal	Particles must be widely distributed	250 micron typical
220-80	100		Particles must pass through a small orifice	
250-50**	200	65% on 50 mesh nominal	Processing temperatures are too high to use other grades	350 micron typical

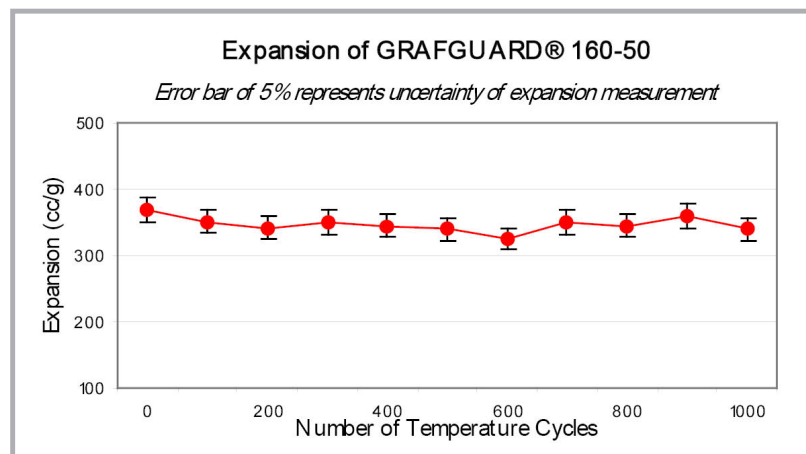
Notes:

** Non-standard grade - please contact GrafTech for availability

Performance Stability

Where conventional flame retardants can lose effectiveness when subjected to heat, humidity or UV radiation, GRAFGUARD products remain stable indefinitely and provide dependable expansion.

Cycled from temperatures below freezing to above boiling (-10°C to +110°C) six times each day, expansion measurements show that GRAFGUARD products exhibit no degradation in expansion volume, even after hundreds of cycles.



Surface Chemistry

The surface chemistry of GRAFGUARD expandable graphite can be modified to meet specific processing or formulation requirements. Grades are offered as “N” neutral (pH 5-8.5) or “B” basic (pH 7.5-11).

Grade Designation

Every GRAFGUARD product is identified by a specific grade. For example, 220-50N represents a flake with an onset temperature of 220°C, manufactured from 50 mesh natural graphite, with Neutral surface chemistry.

<u>220-</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>N</u>
Onset temperature (°C)	Particle Sizing (Mesh)	Surface Chemistry (Neutral or Basic)

Environmental Benefits

Emphasis on environmental protection is at an all-time high, and continues to increase. Regulations worldwide are becoming more stringent as legislators seek new ways to prevent greenhouse gases, heavy metals and other toxic substances from entering the environment. This trend is reducing the number of acceptable fire retardant additives that meet new and anticipated environmental requirements.

GRAFGUARD expandable graphite provides an alternative to halogenated fire retardant additives. It contains no chlorine or bromine compounds, and has been proven to be compatible and synergistic with many other conventional fire retardant additives in a wide variety of plastics, foams, coatings, composites and paper products. The material presents no explosion hazard, and can be handled safely without special precautions.

In addition, GRAFGUARD expandable graphite is manufactured without the lead and chromium that can cause certain graphite flakes, as well as the products containing them, to be treated as hazardous waste - eliminating the need, expense and potential liability of hazardous waste disposal.

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