

Effect of Curing Temperature on Development of Water Based Polyurethane Coated Polyester

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ABSTRACT

The coating and lamination gives a powerful tool for the advancement of textile technology. It provides the opportunities to produce the special fabrics like water-proof resistant tarpaulins, coverings, large tents. Waterproof breathable fabrics are one of the harsh weather fabrics that protect the wearer without hampering their efficiency. Garments made from such fabrics keep away water from entering and wetting the body but allow the passage of air and moisture. The passage of water vapour from the garment makes it breathable and hence comfortable. One of the different methods of achieving waterproof breathable fabrics is application of polyurethane paste coating on the substrate. These coatings work on the principle of adsorption and diffusion and desorption of water vapour. Today waterproof breathable fabrics are largely manufactured by Paste coating with solvent based polyurethane emulsions. Solvent based emulsion coating causes adverse health hazards because of solvent evaporation during curing stage. Therefore the current study is an attempt to substitute current solvent based PU emulsion coating technology with water based PU emulsion. Here the performance of environmentally friendly water-based polyurethane dispersions (PUD) for waterproof breathable coating was studied and compared with commercial solvent based waterproof breathable fabric. Also The effect of variable curing temperature on the breathability of polyester was evaluated.

Keywords: *Water based polyurethane emulsion, waterproof breathable coating, moisture vapour transmission rate, air permeability, tearing strength, moisture management properties, hydrostatic head test*

Introduction:

During any physical activity the body provides cooling partly by producing insensible perspiration. If the water vapor produced, increases the relative humidity of the atmosphere inside the clothing sufficiently to cause sensible perspiration and increased thermal conductivity of the insulating air then the clothing becomes uncomfortable. In extreme cases hypothermia can result as the body loses heat too rapidly causing a decrease in core temperature. If the sensible perspiration cannot evaporate and the thermal insulation of the clothing remains high then the body is prevented from cooling and hyperthermia can result. Even small deviations from normal skin and core temperature can cause discomfort and reduction during physical activity. [1]

Waterproof breathable fabrics are designed for use in garments that provide protection from the weather that is from wind, rain and loss of body heat [2] Waterproof fabric completely prevents the Penetration and absorption of liquid water, in contrast to water-repellent (or shower-resistant) fabric, which only delays the penetration of water. Traditionally, fabric was made waterproof by coating it with a continuous layer of impervious flexible material. The first coating materials used was animal fat, wax and hardened Vegetable oils. But waterproof breathable fabrics prevent the penetration of liquid water from outside to inside the clothing yet permit the penetration of water vapors from inside Waterproof breathable fabrics.

Designing a suitable breathable fabric is quite complex and requires the understanding of textile and polymer science, human physiology and dynamics of moist vapor transport across the fabrics and clothing assemblies. Moisture vapor transport through waterproof breathable fabric and clothing system is dependent on the temperature gradient across the waterproof breathable layer, the humidity of the clothing microclimate, and the interaction between water-vapor and the clothing layers.

Fundamental considerations that need to be considered while designing a breathable fabric are

- Water proofness
- Mass of the fabric
- Durability/flexibility of coating/laminating
- Comfort level

- Aesthetic property
- Water-vapor transmission
- Effectiveness of clothing against wind chill factor
- Durability: tear tensile and peel strength; flex and abrasion resistance
- Launder ability
- Tape seal ability with good adhesion
- Strength of coating
- Good washability/dry clean ability
- Resistance to insect repellents
- Good hydrostatic resistance [3, 4, 5].

There are several methods which can be used to obtain fabrics which are both breathable and waterproof. These can be divided into three groups:

- Densely woven fabrics
- Membranes
- Coatings

Coated fabrics with waterproof breathable fabrics consist of polymeric material applied to one surface of fabric [6,7]. Polyurethane is used as the coating material. The coatings are of two types:

- 1) Micro porous membranes
- 2) Hydrophilic membranes.

In micro porous membrane the coating contains very fine interconnected channels much smaller than finest raindrop but larger than water vapour molecules.[8,9] Hydrophilic coatings is same as hydrophilic membrane but the difference between the micro porous and hydrophilic material is the former water vapour passes through the permanent air-permeable structure whereas the later transmits vapour through mechanism involving adsorption-diffusion and de-sorption.[10,11]

Material and Methods:

Raw material: Untreated PET fabric (navy Blue, GSM 66.30)

Chemicals used:

Appretan Liq- solvent free polyurethane emulsion, Antimussol UDF liq- modified silicone with emulsifiers, Nuva ARC- Dispersion of fluorine compound, Arkophob® DAN New liq- polyurethane, aqueous dispersion, Lutexal ESL liq. - Synthetic thickener. All chemicals used are procured from Archroma.

Method of Application

Coating technology was used for the application of the water based polyurethane to polyester fabric. Prior to coating fabric is padded with water repellent finish.(Nuva ARC). The type of coating was knife over roller coating, and the machine used was the lab scale coating machine (Taskar Engineering, Ahmadabad). The effect of variable curing temperature on the breathability of polyester was evaluated and curing temperature was selected from 130-170°C. Details of the coating process are mentioned in Table no. 1

Table 1: Water based polyurethane coating recipe formulation

Chemical	Concentration
1. Pre Padding	
Nuva ARC	15 gpl
pH	Acidic pH
70% pick up drying at 120°C for 2-3 min	
2. Coating	
Formulation	Chemicals Conc. (%)
Appretan Liq	95
Arkophob DAN new	3
Water	2
Lutexal F-HIT liq	As per viscosity
Drying at 110°C for 2-3 min	
Curing at 130°C, 140°C, 150°C, 160 °C and 170°C for 5 min	

Table 2: Description of samples

Sample code	Curing Temp. (°C)
CS-1	Commercial coated sample 1
CS-2	Commercial coated sample 2

Untreated Polyester	UT
A	130
B	140
C	150
D	160
E	170

Testing

1. GSM and %Add on

Samples are conditioned to moisture equilibrium for the required time as specified in standard test method. Then weight per square meter is calculated using the following formula.

$$GSM = \left\{ \frac{W}{(X \times Y)} \right\} \times 1000 \times 1000$$

Where GSM = Gram per square meter of the fabric, W = Weight of the specimen in gram.

X = Average length of the swatch in mm, Y = Average width of the swatch in mm. Based on the GSM % add on is calculated by following formula.

$$\% \text{ add on} = \left\{ \frac{\text{GSM after coating} - \text{GSM before coating}}{\text{GSM before coating}} \right\} \times 100$$

2. Tearing Strength (ASTM D1424)

For the determination of tearing strength by the falling pendulum type apparatus, ASTM D1424 test method is used. This test method, using a falling-pendulum Elmendorf type apparatus, covers the determination of the force required to propagate a single-rip tear starting from a cut in a fabric.

3. Moisture vapour transmission rate (BS 7209)

To test the breathability of fabrics, moisture vapor transmission rate measurement is made. To evaluate the MVTR of coated fabric, evaporative dish method following the British Standard BS 7209:1990 was used. The testing was carried out at standard laboratory conditions of $65 \pm 2\%$ relative humidity and $20 \pm 2^\circ$ C temperature.

The MVTR values were calculated using the following equations and measured in $g/m^2/day$

$$MVTR = \frac{24M}{AT}$$

Where M is the loss in mass (grams) of the dish assembly over time; T, time between equilibrium and end of the test after 6 hours; and A, area of specimen exposed.

4. Hydrostatic head test (ISO 811)

Hydrostatic head tester is used for determining the resistance of fabrics to water penetration. ISO 811 test method which is intended for dense fabrics like tarpaulins, tenting is used for testing.

5. Spray test (AATCC 22)

Water proofness of coated fabric on both coated and uncoated side is tested by spray test (AATCC 22).

6. Moisture Management Test (AATCC 195)

Moisture management properties of commercial and developed coated textile fabric is tested by AATCC 195 test method

7. Air Permeability of coated fabric (ASTM D 737)

This test method is for measuring the permeability of fabrics to air and is applicable to industrial fabrics that are permeable to air.

Result and Discussion:

1. GSM and %Add-on

As mentioned in table no. 3, GSM of untreated polyester is 66.3 and fabric coated at optimised parameters shows GSM of 77.71 giving 17.20% add-on after coating. During process parameter optimization it is observed that with increase in curing temperature from 130°C to 150°C , % add on decreases and after 150°C it remains constant indicating that initial temperature is not sufficient for complete polymerization of PU emulsion. Similarly optimum add-on is obtained when fabric is cured at 150°C for 5 min.

Table 3: GSM and %add-on of commercial and water based PU coated Polyester

Sample code	GSM	Add on
CS-1	101.14	-
CS-2	89.34	-
UT	66.3	-
A	79.52	19.93
B	78.38	18.22

C	77.71	17.20
D	77.65	17.11
E	77.68	17.16

2. Tearing Strength of water based PU coated Polyester

From the results mentioned in the table no. 4, it is observed that after coating warpwise and weftwise tearing strength decrease significantly but the obtained tearing strength is comparable with the commercial sample.

The tearing strength is more vital in heavy duty fabrics. So it is important to know the effects of the fabric structural parameters on the tearing resistance of these types of coated fabrics. Generally, high tearing strength is achieved by providing a degree of mobility for the fibers and yams within the structure. When a fabric is being torn, there is a concentration of stress at the apex of the tear. Some degree of mobility within the structure, particularly in shear, permits this stress to be distributed over a broader area, and permits the yarns to bunch together to resist the propagation of the tear. When a coating is applied over the fabric, the degree of mobility possible within the structure is almost invariably reduced. As a result, it is usually found that the tearing strength of the fabric re.

Table 4: Tearing strength of commercial and water based PU coated Polyester

Sample code	Tearing Strength Value (in cN)	
	Warp	Weft
CS-1	1180.3	838.4
CS-2	1204.6	833.9
UT	1749.6	1102.46
A	1136.5	812.4
B	1148.4	819.6
C	1156.5	822.4
D	1143.7	817.8
E	1139.3	809.6

3. Moisture vapour transmission rate (BS 7209)

Commercially available PU solvent coated fabric shows MVTR values in the range of 505.03- 401.23 g/m²/day. MVTR of untreated polyester is 1551.11 and fabric coated at optimised parameters shows MVTR of 523.34 g/m²/day. From the results it is observed that maximum Moisture vapour transmission rate is obtained at 150°C.

Table 5: MVTR of commercial and water based PU coated Polyester

Sample code	Weight after		WVP 24M/AT (g/m ² /day)
	1 hr. Testing (gm)	5 hrs. Testing (gm)	
CS-1	132.78	132.21	505.03
CS-2	133.92	133.35	401.23
UT	132.840	131.320	1351.11
A	132.047	131.478	504.72
B	131.938	131.36	512.70
C	131.730	131.140	523.34
D	132.061	131.48	515.36
E	131.808	131.239	509.15

4. Hydrostatic head test (ISO 811)

In hydrostatic head test, fabric is subjected to increasing hydrostatic pressure. When the third drop penetrates the specimen (drops on the edge are excluded), the actual height of the hydrostatic pressure is read and the test is terminated. According to ISO 811, materials with a hydrostatic head of more than 150 cm can be designated, in general, as rainproof/waterproof.

Commercially available PU solvent coated fabric shows hydrostatic head values in the range of 1038-1123.71 cm whereas, hydrostatic head of untreated polyester is 0 cm and fabric coated at optimised parameters shows hydrostatic head of 264.50 cm. From the results obtained it is observed that as the temperature increases hydrostatic head value increases up to 160°C and thereafter it remains constant.

Table 6: Hydrostatic head test of commercial and water based PU coated Polyester

Sample code	Avg. (cm H ₂ O)
CS-1	1038.1
CS-2	1123.71
UT	0
A	233.71
B	248.19
C	264.50
D	267.31
E	265.15

5. Spray test (AATCC 22)

According to the AATCC 22 spray test rating chart, untreated polyester fabric shows 0 rating i.e. complete wetting of whole upper and lower surfaces. Commercially available PU solvent coated fabric shows spray test rating in the range of 70-100. Developed coated sample shows 90 rating on uncoated side and coated side shows spray test rating of 70 till 140°C and thereafter rating improves to 80. Optimum water proof nature is obtained when fabric is cured at 150°C for 5 min.

Table 7: Spray test rating of commercial and water based PU coated Polyester

Sample code	Rating	
	Uncoated Side	Coated Side
CS-1	100	70
CS-2	90	70
UT	0	0
A	90	70
B	90	70
C	90	80
D	90	80
E	90	80

6. Moisture Management Test (AATCC 195)

Fabric liquid moisture transport properties in multi-dimensions, called moisture management properties significantly influence human perceptions of moisture sensation. This method can be used to quantitatively measure liquid moisture transfer in one step in a fabric in multiple directions. Moisture spreads on both surface of the fabric and transfer from one surface to the opposite. Ten indices are introduced to characterize the liquid moisture management properties of fabric. From the MMT test result it is observed that all developed coated samples are waterproof and their moisture management parameters are comparable with commercial solvent coated sample.

Table 8: Spray test rating of commercial and water based PU coated Polyester

S.N	Fabric Description	Wetting time (sec)		Absorption rate (%sec)		Max. Wetted radius (mm)		Spreading speed (mm/sec)		One way transport capability (OWTR)	Overall moisture management capacity (OMMC)
		T	B	T	B	T	B	T	B		
1	CS-1	3	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
This is water-proof fabric.											
2	CS-2	3	1	4.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
This is Water Proof fabric.											
3	UT	5	5	2	3	2	2	5	5	5	5
This is water penetration fabric											
4	A	2	3	2	4	1	1	1	1	5	4
This is water penetration fabric											
5	B	3	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
This is water proof fabric											
6	C	3	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
This is water proof fabric											
7	D	3	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
This is water proof fabric											
8	E	3	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
This is water proof fabric											

T-Top surface, B-Bottom surface

9. Air Permeability of coated fabric (ASTM D 737)

Resistance to wind penetration is usually assessed by measuring air permeability. The air permeability of textile fabrics is determined by the rate of flow of air passing perpendicularly through a given area of fabric is measured at a given pressure difference across the fabric test area over a given time period. The main aim of the studies of an air permeability of textile materials is usually to find a relationship between an air permeability and structure of textiles. The porosity has a very strong influence on uncoated textile materials air permeability. Air permeability is increased as pore size is increased. The air permeability of coated fabrics is very low. The air permeability values of the coated samples were found to be orders of magnitude lower than the control (uncoated) fabric sample. The reduction in the air permeability values with increase in hydrophobic component suggests a continuous, defect-free film. The higher add-on values also gave better barriers to air penetration as expected. Commercially available PU solvent coated fabric shows air permeability values in the range of 0.1124- 0.12 cm³/cm²/s, whereas untreated polyester fabric shows air permeability value of 40.96. Maximum air permeability is obtained at 150°C.

Table 9: Air permeability of commercial and water based PU coated Polyester

Sample code	Air Permeability (cm ³ /cm ² /s)
CS-1	0.1200
CS-2	0.1124
UT	40.96
A	0.177
B	0.183
C	0.191
D	0.193
E	0.190

Conclusion:

The demand for moisture management and highly breathable fabric constructions is growing at the same time regulatory pressures to reduce or eliminate solvents and VOCs remain strong globally. Water based PU emulsions offer a viable alternative to solvent-containing PU emulsion used to produce commercial waterproof breathable fabrics. The robust emulsion stability and functionality of these water based products provide new tools to meet the changing ecological and technical demands of the coated fabrics market. The environmentally friendly Water based PU coating technology opens a window of opportunity into a broad range of applications that go beyond the textile coating industry.

By using Environment friendly water based Polyurethane, fixer and thickener a new coating formulation were developed. Developed coated fabric shows highest breathability, air permeability and water proofness performance at 150°C curing temperature and 5 mins curing time. And the performance of the developed garment is comparable with commercially available solvent based PU coated polyester.

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