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Number 7

APPLICATION NOTE

Use of Stabilant 22 in Computing & Peripheral Equipment

- *What is Stabilant 22?*

Stabilant 22 is an *initially non-conductive* block polymer that under the effect of an electrical field and/or when used in a very narrow gap between metal contacts, becomes *conductive*. The electric field gradient at which this occurs is set so that the material will remain *non-conductive* between adjacent contacts in a multiple pin environment.

Thus, when applied to electromechanical contacts, Stabilant 22 provides the connection reliability of a soldered joint without bonding the contact surfaces together.

While **Stabilant 22** exhibits surfactant action it is *not* sold as a contact cleaner. Equally, it exhibits quite good lubricating properties but is *not* sold as a contact lubricant. Its metier is in its *active properties* when used in a connection and the other properties are a bonus.

- *Where can it be used?*

Stabilant 22 can be used wherever electrical contacts are used, whether this is in connectors, or in switches. For example, one common use is to improve the connection reliability of socketed IC's in computers.

- *Why should we use Stabilant over less expensive alternatives?*

Granted that the material itself is expensive, however it is unique in having a very long useful life once in place. Unlike other so-called contact treatments **Stabilant 22** will not cross-link (becoming varnish-like) under the action of sulphur based curing agents in elastomers, cutting oil residues, or the sulphur-bearing free-machining metal alloys used in some contacts. In most types of service work, the cost of the time involved in removing and replacing a board will be much greater than the cost of the **Stabilant** used to treat the board. Here what is important is that not only will proper board treatment cure existing contact problems, it will prevent others from occurring thus eliminating the necessity of repeating the treatment at a later date!

In other words, why do a job more than once?

- *In what forms is Stabilant available?*

Stabilant 22 is packaged in 15mL, 50mL, 100mL, 250mL, 500mL and 1 Liter containers. **Stabilant 22** is available in two forms; as a concentrate **Stabilant 22**, and as an isopropyl alcohol-diluted form called **Stabilant 22a**. Because of the 4:1 dilu-

tion, a given size container of **Stabilant 22a** will cost about one-fifth the amount of a container of **Stabilant 22** for it has only one-fifth the amount of the concentrate in it. A third packaging is available for industrial-bulk users. **Stabilant 22s** packages the concentrate such that it occupies one-fifth the volume of an otherwise empty container. This allows the end-user to add his own diluant and saves the added costs of shipping isopropyl alcohol, as well as allowing the end-user to use an alternate diluant such as one of the other solvents used in electronics .

- **What is the difference in use of the Stabilants?**

The concentrate, **Stabilant 22** is most useful where the connections are out in the open such as the card-type connections. Where the connections are not too easy to get at or where the user wishes to apply the material to something such as a socketed IC (without removing the IC from its socket) it is easier to use the alcohol diluted form, **Stabilant 22a**. The isopropyl alcohol diluant serves *only* to carry the concentrate into the connector.

- **Is it available in a spray can?**

Not at present. During the initial stages of our market research we did provide spray cans of the material, but the users found that in most cases it did not speed the application of the **Stabilants** enough to offset the added cost of the material that was wasted. The spray can generally left a film of excess material that had to be cleaned up if only for appearances sake.

A further consideration is the fact that because of their degradation of the ozone-layer chlorofluorocarbon propellants are no longer generally used in spray cans, a highly inflammable mixture of butane and propane often being substituted. Remember, very little **Stabilant 22** is necessary to treat a contact, so why waste it?

- **Is Stabilant just another contact cleaner?**

No, it is important to remember that **Stabilant 22** is an *electrically active* material which enhances conductivity within a contact without causing leakage between adjacent contacts. Thus large quantities of the material do not have to be "hosed" on as is the case with cleaners.

- **Just how much should be used?**

Normally, a final film thickness of from 1 to 2 mils of the concentrate is all that is necessary. In other words you want just enough to fill up the interstices between the contact's faces. Where you're using **Stabilant 22a**, you'll have to use enough so that once the isopropyl alcohol evaporates the desired 1 to 2 mil film of **Stabilant 22** remains.

- **What is the 15mL service kit?**

This was made up at the request of several manufacturers who wanted a standard kit that they could issue to their service personnel. It consists of a 15mL container of **Stabilant 22a** and some applicators, all in a small capped tube. The applicators are reusable.

- **Why would anyone want to buy a half-liter of the concentrate?**

Many manufacturers make large volume purchases, diluting the material for specific applicators used on their production lines.

Many end users have found that the material cuts their service costs so much that it is more economical to purchase **Stabilant 22** in the larger container sizes rather than run any risk of being without the material. The number of uses tends to increase as users discover the large number of problems that can be solved by the material. One user routinely applies it to the flashlight switches and batteries it issues to its security guards and has reported that the number of requests for replacement units has dropped appreciably.

- **How can I be sure that the material works?**

We could cite the fact that **Stabilant 22** is used by many hospitals on their bio-medical electronics to improve reliability of the equipment where lives are at stake; in the balance, we could cite the use of **Stabilant 22** by many broadcasting networks to achieve the last measure of reliability in critical network switching applications, we could cite its use in navigational aids, or we could cite the years of use in the audio field where even consumers found the material easy to use and its results impressive; but we still feel that the best way to find out just how well it works is to try it out! That's why we have samples available. Almost every service shop or manufacturer has equipment available where the switches or connectors have become erratic over the years. Use **Stabilant 22a** on them for a quick turnaround test, or use the material in field service and satisfy yourself.

- **What is the effect in computers?**

The effect of **Stabilant 22** in Computers is to reduce the number of times the system locks-up or crashes, sometimes it even eliminates non-software crashes completely.

- **What is the effect of the material when used in test gear?**

When used on socketed IC's, photo-couplers/isolators, rotary, push button, or slide switches, or even on BNC connectors, the net effect is usually to make the proper operation of the equipment less erratic, and in the case of IEEE-488A buss-controlled equipment, to cut down on the potential for system lock-ups.

- **Can the material be used on robotic equipment?**

Yes, not only can it be used on the circuit cards, but often older robotic equipment suffers from erratic contacts in the connections between the electronics section and the actuator part of the equipment even though most of these connectors are of the environmentally sealed type. Here **Stabilant 22** is ideal.

- **Is the material hazardous?**

Stabilant 22 has caused no skin reactions in tests, and is, in the undiluted form, non-flammable, although if raised past its decomposition temperature of 200° C it will support combustion. If orally ingested in small quantities it will cause bowel looseness while large quantities, (100 ml of the concentrate) could lead to systemic collapse. **Stabilant 22** has an LD₅₀ of about 5 grams per kilogram body weight.

- **Can it be used by untrained personnel?**

The consumer version of **Stabilant 22** which is sold as TWEEK™ has been used for several years now without problems.

- **What is the best way to apply it to a contact?**

The 15mL container has a "dropper" type cap that allows **Stabilant 22a** to be applied directly to such components as socketed IC's, switches, connectors, etc. Some end users prefer to buy larger quantities and use industrial syrettes to apply the material onto connections. Camel's hair or sable brushes can be used to brush it on card-edge connectors. Cards can also have their edge connectors dipped into the dilute material.

- **Does the action of Stabilant 22/22a deteriorate with age?**

Stabilants have been in some field trial applications for over twelve years now without showing any sign of reduced effectiveness. The material has a high molecular weight and a very low vapor pressure, thus it is not prone to evaporation.

Once again let us emphasize the point that unlike some other contact treatments containing oils, **Stabilant 22** will not cross-link when exposed to certain materials such as high sulphur brass, or when used on contacts where cross-link promoting agents are present in the environment. This phenomena of "varnishing" does not occur with **Stabilant 22**.

NATO Supply Code 38948 - 15 mL of S22a has NATO Part # 5999-21-900-6937

The **Stabilants** are patented in Canada - 1987; US Patent number 4696832. World-wide patents applied for. Because the patents cover contacts treated with the material, a Point-of-sale License is granted with each sale of the material.

MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

NOTICE

This data has been supplied for information purposes only. While to our knowledge it is accurate, users should determine the suitability of the material for their application by running their own tests. Neither D.W. Electrochemicals Ltd., their distributors, or their dealers assume any responsibility or liability for damages to equipment and/or consequent damages, howsoever caused, based on the use of this information.

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