

# Eastman Solvents Technical Tip

## Using Eastman Methyl Acetate in Cleaning Applications (TT-24A)

### INTRODUCTION

Eastman, the world's leading producer of methyl acetate, offers this solvent in two grades to suit a variety of application needs:

- **Regular (Industrial) Grade** offers a minimum assay of 96%, a maximum methanol content of 2.5%, and a maximum water content of 1.5%.
- **High Purity Grade** offers a minimum assay of 99.5%, a maximum methanol content of 0.10%, and a maximum water content of 0.05%.

In many applications, *Eastman* methyl acetate can be an effective replacement for acetone and other fast-evaporating solvents.

**Table 1: Sales Specifications**

Property	Eastman Methyl Acetate	Eastman Methyl Acetate, High Purity
Strength - assay	96.0% min.	99.5% min.
Methanol	2.5% max.	0.10% max.
Water	1.5% max.	0.05% max.
Acidity as acetic acid	0.15% max.	0.05% max.
Color, PCS	5 max.	5 max.

### CONSIDERATIONS

#### Wide Formulation Latitude

*Eastman* methyl acetate can be used alone or in easily blended formulations to optimize cleaning efficiency. Because methyl acetate is miscible with most organic solvents, it finds use in a variety of cleaning applications, including automotive, marine and industrial. It carries the favorable FEMA designation of GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) rating.

Some common cleaning applications include:

- Universal cleaner
- Low-VOC and environmental cleaners
- Aerosol carburetor cleaners
- Paint gun cleaners
- Cleaners for printing inks

#### Regulatory and VOC-Exempt Status

Concerns for workers' safety and the environment have facilitated the decline of chlorinated solvents in many applications. Methyl acetate was added to the list of compounds excluded from the definition of volatile organic compound (VOC) on the basis that these compounds have been determined to have negligible photochemical reactivity. Methyl acetate is relatively non-toxic, non-reactive and readily biodegradable, making it useful in environmentally friendly formulations.

#### Fast Evaporation Rate

Fast drying is often a key performance requirement in cleaning applications. A slow-drying solvent can impede the cleaning process adding additional labor cost. In addition, slow-drying solvents can attract air contaminants and leave residues that negate the effectiveness of the cleaning processes.

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Table 2 shows physical properties of methyl acetate versus other fast-evaporating solvents. Methyl acetate evaporates faster than MEK and ethyl acetate, allowing its use as a replacement for those solvents in applications where VOC reduction is required. Methyl acetate is similar to acetone in evaporation rate, VOC exemption, and non-HAP status, but offers a higher flash point and hydrophobic property.

The hydrophobic nature of methyl acetate can be a key performance criteria in cleaning applications where moisture related problems can damage or corrode parts, leading to defects or rejects. For example, it can be used in automotive and aviation applications prior to coating or painting parts.

**Table 2: Physical Properties of Methyl Acetate vs. Other Fast-Evaporating Solvents**

	MEK	Methylene Chloride	Acetone	Ethyl Acetate	<i>Eastman Methyl Acetate, HP</i>
CAS number	78-93-3	75-09-2	67-64-1	141-78-6	79-20-9
Evaporation rate <sup>1</sup>	3.8	14.5	6.3	4.1	6.2
Azeotropes, BP °C	73.4	38.3	None	70.4	56.1
Boiling point @ 760 mm Hg °F	175	102–106	132–135	168–173	132.4–136.7
Electrical resistance, Megohms	0.2	1.5	<0.01	20	4.0
Hansen Solubility Parameters					
Hydrogen bonding	2.5	3	3.4	3.5	3.7
Nonpolar	7.6	8.9	7.6	7.7	7.6
Polar	4.4	3.1	5.1	2.6	3.5
Total	9.1	9.7	9.8	8.8	9.2
Solubility @ 20°C, wt. %					
In water	27.1 wt. %	–	Complete	7.4 wt. %	22.7 wt. %
Water in	12.5 wt. %	–	Complete	3.3 wt. %	8.8 wt. %
Surface tension @ 20°C, dynes/cm	24.6	26.5	22.3	23.9	25.2
Vapor pressure @ 20°C, mm Hg	70.2	340	185	86	179.5
Wt./Vol. @ 20°C, lb/gal	6.67	10.98 <sup>2</sup>	6.6 l	7.51	7.78
Flash point, Tag closed cup, °C	-9	None	-20	-4	-15

<sup>1</sup>Evaporation rate, (*n*-butyl acetate = 1), <sup>2</sup> Wt./Vol. @ 25°C lb/gal

### CONCLUSION

The regular (industrial) and the high purity grade of *Eastman* methyl acetate provide wide formulation latitude in a variety of cleaning applications. Contact *Eastman* to discuss which grade of *Eastman* methyl acetate best suits your specific application needs.

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# EASTMAN

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Eastman Chemical Company Corporate Headquarters

P.O. Box 431  
Kingsport, TN 37662-5280 U.S.A.

Telephone:

U.S.A. and Canada, 800-EASTMAN (800-327-8626)

Other Locations, (1) 423-229-2000

Fax: (1) 423-229-1193

www.eastman.com

### LATIN AMERICA

#### Eastman Chemical Latin America

9155 South Dadeland Blvd.

Suite 1116

Miami, FL 33156 U.S.A.

Telephone: (1) 305-671-2800

Fax: (1) 305-671-2805

### EUROPE / MIDDLE EAST / AFRICA

#### Eastman Chemical B.V.

Fascinatio Boulevard 602-614

2909 VA Capelle aan den IJssel

The Netherlands

Telephone: (31) 10 2402 111

Fax: (31) 10 2402 100

### ASIA PACIFIC

#### Eastman Chemical Japan Ltd.

AIG Aoyama Building 5F

2-11-16 Minami Aoyama

Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0062 Japan

Telephone: (81) 3-3475-9510

Fax: (81) 3-3475-9515

#### Eastman Chemical Asia Pacific Pte. Ltd.

#05-04 Winsland House

3 Killiney Road

Singapore 239519

Telephone: (65) 6831-3100

Fax: (65) 6732-4930

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