

ABSTRACT

A description is given of an improved process for the recovery of alkali metal or alkaline earth metal terephthalate and of alkylene glycol, from polyalkylene terephthalate, in particular from polyethylene terephthalate (P.E.T.), the alkylene glycol, in particular the ethylene glycol, being produced in the form of vapour during the saponification reaction initiated by the action of intensive kneading of the polyalkylene terephthalate and alkali metal reagent mixture at a temperature of between 100° and 200°C. The alkylene glycol is recovered in gaseous form by entrainment by an inert gas or by extraction at reduced pressure. The alkali metal terephthalate or alkaline earth metal terephthalate is obtained in solid and powdery form; it can be easily stored, transported and re-dissolved in order to be purified and then possibly converted into terephthalic acid or ester.

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