

ABSTRACT



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Broadly, the present invention is directed to a process for the removal of sulfur from an acrylate waste stream. In particular, disclosed is a process for the recovery and reuse of an acid catalyst employed primarily in the reaction of acrylic esters. During the reaction of acrylic acid and an alcohol in the presence of an acid catalyst, the product acrylate and water are removed from the remaining reaction by-products (heavy ends and oligomers). These by-product heavy end components which include the acid catalyst employed in the reaction process, are directed to an evaporator. The residue stream therefrom is then contacted with water in an extractor. Upon contact with water, a phase separation occurs between the acid catalyst/water mixture and other organic matter. The organic matter is discarded while the acid/water mixture is recycled to the reaction process.

The present invention employs the use of an evaporator and an extractor to aid in the separation of the acid catalyst from the reaction by-products waste stream. This removal of acid results in fewer organic sulfur components to be emitted from the reaction process and hence is a more environmentally friendly process.



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