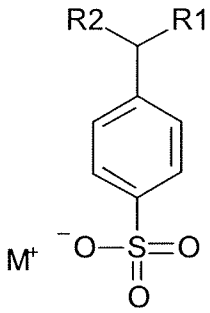
**Claims**

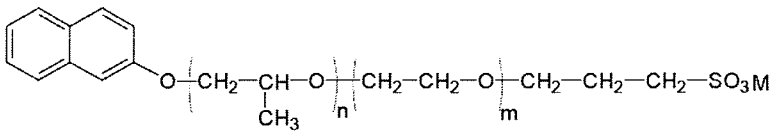
1. An aqueous stripping composition for the removal of polymeric surface sealants on metal surfaces, said stripping composition comprising an alkalizing agent, a polymer splitting agent, a swelling agent, and a cloud point booster, wherein said polymer splitting agent is at least one gluconate and wherein said swelling agent is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of glycol ethers and mono-alcohols having 3 to 9 carbon atoms, the composition additionally comprising a surfactant.

2. The stripping composition according to claim 1, wherein said cloud point booster is at least one alkylbenzenesulfonate according to formula I




(I)

wherein $R_1$ and $R_2$ are independently from each other H or a branched or unbranched $C_1$ to $C_{13}$ alkyl group, and M is at least one metal selected from the group consisting Li, Na, K, or a naphthyl sulfopropyl diether according to formula II




(II)

wherein m=1 to 11, and n=1 to 17 and M is at least one metal selected from the group consisting Li, Na, K.

3. The stripping composion according to claim 1 wherein the cloud point booster is the alkylbenzenesulfonate according to formula I.

4. The stripping composition according to one of the preceding claims, said composition having a pH-value of ≥13.

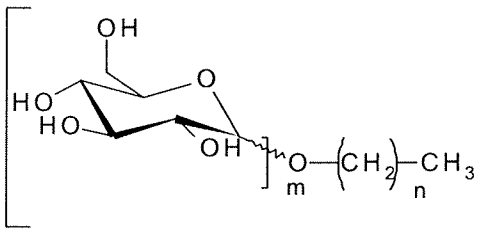
5. The stripping composition according to claim 1~~one of the preceding claims~~, wherein said polymer splitting agent is comprised in a concentration range of between ≥1 g/l and ≤100 g/l~~, preferably in a range of between ≥10 g/l and ≤80 g/l~~.

6. The stripping composition according to claim 1~~one of the preceding claims~~, wherein said swelling agent is comprised in a concentration range of between ≥1 g/l and ≤200 g/l~~, preferably in a range of between ≥5 g/l and ≤150 g/l~~.

7. The stripping composition according to claim 1~~one of the preceding claims~~, wherein said cloud point booster is comprised in a concentration range of between ≥1 g/l and ≤100 g/l~~, preferably in a range of between ≥10 g/l and ≤80 g/l~~.

~~8. The stripping composition according to one of the preceding claims, additionally comprising a surfactant.~~

~~9.~~8. The stripping composition according to claim ~~8~~1, wherein said surfactant is a non-ionic surfactant, preferably a polyglycoside, most preferred a polyglucoside according to formula III




(III)

wherein m=1 to 5, and n=5 to 15.

~~10.~~9. The stripping composition according to ~~one of~~ claims 8 ~~or 9~~, wherein said surfactant is comprised in a concentration of ≤100 g/l, preferably in a range of between ≥0.5 g/l to ≤90 g/l.

~~11.~~10. The stripping composition according to claim 1~~one of the preceding claims~~, wherein the composition has a surface tension at 20°C of ≤35 mN/m~~, preferably in a range between of ≥25 mN/m to ≤35 mN/m~~.

~~12.~~11. The stripping composition according to claim 1~~one of the preceding claims~~, wherein the alkalizing agent is comprised in a concentration of between ≥30 g/l to ≤300 g/l~~, preferably in a range of between ≥50 g/l and ≤250 g/l~~.

~~13. A method for the removal of polymeric surface sealants from metal surfaces, said method comprising the step of contacting the surface from which the polymeric surface sealant should be removed with an aqueous stripping composition according to one of the claims 1 to 11.~~

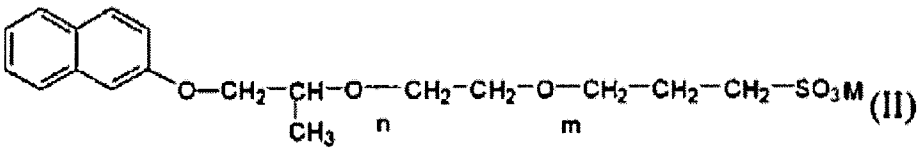
~~14. The method according to claim 13, wherein the surface from which the polymeric surface sealant should be removed is brought into contact with said stripping composition at a temperature in a range of between ≥10°C and ≤100°C, preferably in a range of between ≥50°C and ≤80°C.~~

~~15. The method according to one of the claim 13 or 14, wherein the surface from which the polymeric surface sealant should be removed is brought into contact with said stripping composition for a time of ≤60 min, preferably for a time of between ≤45 min and ≥ 15s.~~

~~16. The method according to one of the claims 13 to 15, wherein the polymeric surface sealant is a sealant of the group consisting of polyurethane sealant, polyethylene sealant, polyethylene wax, polyacryl sealant, polysilicate sealant.~~

12. The stripping composition according to claim 1 wherein the surfactant is a non-ionic surfactant.

13. An aqueous stripping composition for the removal of polymeric surface sealants on metal surfaces, said stripping composition comprising an alkalizing agent, a polymer splitting agent, a swelling agent, and a cloud point booster, wherein said polymer splitting agent is at least one gluconate and wherein said swelling agent is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of glycol ethers and mono-alcohols having 3 to 9 carbon atoms, wherein the cloud point booster is a naphthyl sulfopropyl diether according to formula II




(II)

wherein m=1 to 11, and n=1 to 17 and M is at least one metal selected from the group consisting Li, Na, K.

14. A method for the removal of polymeric surface sealants from a metal surface, the method comprising:

contacting the metal surface having polymeric surface sealants thereon with an aqueous stripping composition, the stripping composition comprising an alkalizing agent, a polymer splitting agent, a swelling agent, and a cloud point booster, wherein said polymer splitting agent comprises at least one gluconate and wherein said swelling agent comprises at least one compound selected from the group consisting of glycol ethers and mono-alcohols having 3 to 9 carbon atoms; and

rinsing the metal surface following contact with the aqueous stripping composition;

wherein the metal surface is a zinc surface, a zinc alloy surface, or a steel surface; and

wherein the polymeric surface sealant is a sealant of the group consisting of polyurethane sealant, polyethylene sealant, polyethylene wax, polyacryl sealant, polysilicate sealant.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising reworking the metal surface after said rinsing.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said reworking comprises plating.

17. The method of claim 14 further comprising dipping the metal surface in a copper sulfate solution to form a black conversion layer thereon after said rinsing.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the metal surface is contacted by dipping the metal surface in the aqueous stripping composition or by spraying the aqueous stripping composition onto the metal surface.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the metal surface is contacted with the aqueous stripping composition by dipping the metal surface in the stripping composition, and the metal surface and/or stripping composition are agitated during contact.

20. The method of claim 14, wherein the metal surface is a zinc surface or a zinc alloy surface.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the metal surface is a passivated or chromated zinc or zinc alloy surface.

22. The method of claim 14, wherein the metal surface is a steel surface.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the steel surface is chromium plated steel.

24. The method according to claim 14, wherein the metal surface is contacted with the stripping composition at a temperature in a range of between ≥10°C and ≤100°C.

25. The method according to claim 14 wherein the metal surface is contacted with the stripping composition for a time of ≤60min.