

BLEND OF POLY ARYL ETHER KETONES AND POLYETHERIMIDE SULFONES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to blends of polyaryl ether ketones, polyaryl ketones, polyether ketones, polyether ether ketones and mixtures thereof with at least one polysulfone etherimide and articles made from them.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Crystalline poly aryl ketones resins are known in the art as polyaryl ether ketone (PAEK) resins. PAEK resins, for example polyaryl ketones, polyether ketones and polyether ether ketones, have very desirable properties, such as solvent resistance, flame resistance, low wear rate, abrasion resistance, and high strength.

However the relatively low glass transition temperatures (T_g) of these crystalline resins limits their use at high temperatures under load. This deficiency has been improved, but not solved, by the addition of fiber glass, carbon fibers and other reinforcements as well as mineral fillers. Unfortunately, these changes, while improving one property, adversely affect other properties. For example addition of fibers, increases weight, reduces flow and induces anisotropy in molded parts. Such anisotropy in a part may, for example, result in warp or other undesirable dimensional changes, such as curling in a film. In some instances the fiber additives can interfere with the surface smoothness of the shaped parts, causing uneven surface properties. This is especially true in thin parts and films. Addition of a reinforcing filler to PAEK resins will also make it difficult to extrude thin films and fibers.

Thus there exists a need for crystalline poly aryl ether ketone formulations with a range of improved properties, for instance load bearing capabilities at high temperature, while still having good melt processability allowing for their improved use in molded articles, sheets, films and fibers.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURE

Figure 1 shows the flexural modulus, measured in MegaPascals (MPa), as a function of temperature for an unblended PEEK resin (example A), a miscible polyetherether ketone (PEEK)- polyetherimide (PEI) blend (example B) and two blends combining PEEK with polysulfone etherimide (PSEI) resins (examples 1 & 2). The modulus was measured as per ASTM method D5418 using dynamic mechanical methods on a 3.2 mm molded bar.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to phase separated blends of polyaryl ether ketones, polyaryl ketones, polyether ketones, polyether ether ketones and mixtures thereof with at least one polysulfone etherimide, wherein the polysulfone etherimide has greater than or equal to 50 mole% of the polymer linkages containing at least one aryl sulfone group. Such blends have improved load bearing capability at high temperature. In another aspect a high crystallization temperature, especially at fast cooling rates, is achieved. In such blends the presence of two separate polymeric phases is important to the improvement in properties.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In this specification and in the claims that follow, reference will be made to a number of terms that shall be defined to have the following meaning. The singular forms "a", "an" and "the" include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. "Optional" or "optionally" mean that the subsequently described event or circumstance may or may not occur, and that the description includes instances where said event or circumstance occurs and instances where it does not.

The present invention is directed to a phase separated polymer blends comprising a mixture of: a) a first resin component selected from one or more of the group comprising: polyaryl ether ketones, polyaryl ketones, polyether ketones and polyether ether ketones; with, b) a second resin component comprising at least one polysulfone

etherimide having greater than or equal to 50 mole% of the linkages containing at least one aryl sulfone group.

In the context of this invention phase separated means that the PAEK and the PSEI resins exist in admixture as separate chemical entities that can be distinguished, using standard analytical techniques, for example such as microscopy, differential scanning calorimetry or dynamic mechanical analysis, to show a least two distinct polymeric phases one of which comprises PAEK resin and one of which comprises PSEI resin. In some instances the phases will contain greater than about 80 wt% of said resin. In other instances the blends will form separate distinct domains from about 0.1 to 50 microns in size, in others cases the domains will range in size from about 0.1 to 20 microns. The PAEK-PSEI blends may be completely immiscible or may show partial miscibility but must behave such that, at least in the solid state, the blend shows two or more distinct polymeric phases.

The ratio of first component resin to second component resin can be any that results in a blend that has improved properties i.e. better or worse depending on the end use application, than either component alone. The ratio, in parts by weight, may range anywhere from 1:99 to 99:1, depending on the end use application, and the desired property to be improved. The range of ratios can also be from 15:85 to 85:15 or even anywhere from 25:75 to 75:25. Depending on the application, the ratio may be also be from 40:60 to 60:40. The skilled artisan will appreciate that changing the ratios of the first resin component to the second resin component can fall to any real number ratio within the recited ranges depending on the desired result.

The properties of the final blend, which can be adjusted by changing the ratios of ingredients, include heat distortion temperature and load bearing capability. For example, in one embodiment the polyetherimide sulfone resin can be present in any amount effective to change, i.e. improve by increasing, the load bearing capability of the PAEK blends over the individual components themselves. In some instances the polyaryl ether ketone resin can be present from 30 to 70 wt% of the entire mixture while the polysulfone etherimide varies from 70 to 30 wt%.

In some embodiments of the invention the composition will have a heat distortion temperature (HDT) measured using ASTM method D5418, on a 3.2 mm bar at 0.46 Mpa (66 psi) of greater than about 170 °C. In other instances the HDT at 0.46 MPA (66 psi) will be over 200 °C. In still other instances, load bearing capability of the PAEK – polysulfone etherimides will be shown in a Vicat temperature, as measured by ASTM method D1525 at 50 newtons (N) of greater than about 200 °C.

In still other instances load bearing capability of the PAEK – polysulfone etherimide compositions will be shown by a flexural modulus of greater than or equal to about 200 MPa as measured on a 3.2 mm bar, for example as measured by ASTM method D5418, at 200 °C.

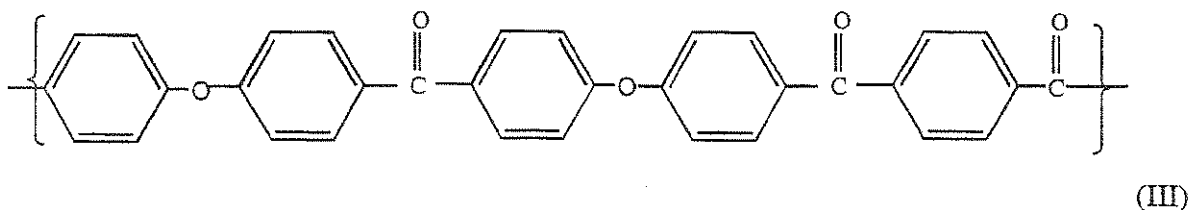
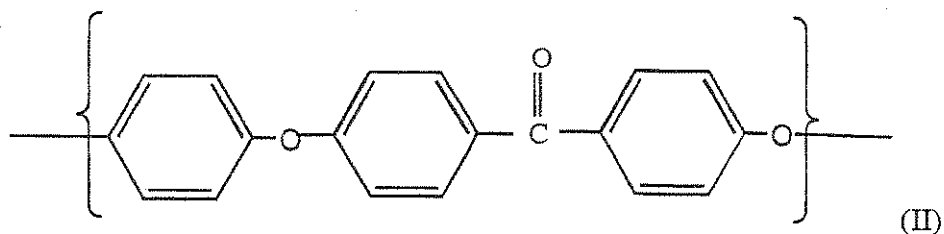
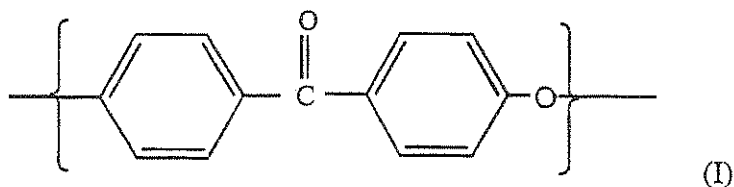
Polymer blends according to the present invention may be made by mixing in the molten state, an amount of: a) a first resin component selected from one or more of the group comprising polyaryl ether ketones, polyaryl ketones, polyether ketones and polyether ether ketones; with, b) a second resin component comprising at least one polysulfone etherimide having greater than or equal to 50 mole% of the linkages containing at least one aryl sulfone group. The two components may be mixed by any method known to the skilled artisan that will result in a blend according to the present invention. Such methods include extrusion, sintering and etc.

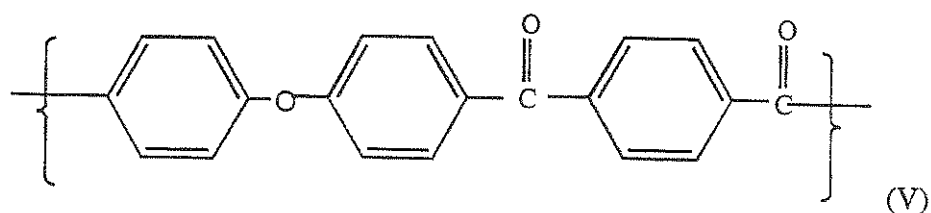
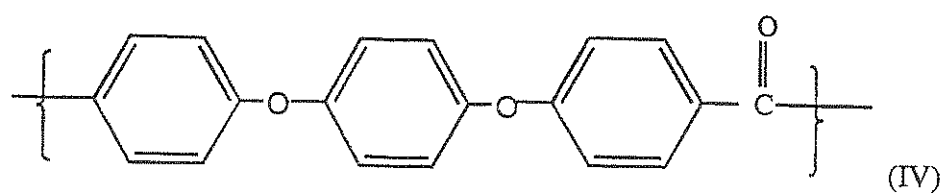
As used in the present invention the term Polyaryl ether ketones (PAEK) comprises several polymer types containing aromatic rings, usually phenyl rings, linked primarily by ketone and ether groups in different sequences. Examples of PAEK resins are; polyether ketones (PEK), polyether ether ketones (PEEK), polyether ketone ether ketone ketones (PEKEKK) and polyether ketone ketones (PEKK) and copolymers containing such groups as well as blends thereof. The PAEK polymers may comprise monomer units containing an aromatic ring, usually a phenyl ring, a keto group and an ether group in any sequence. Low levels, for example less than 10 mole %, of addition linking groups may be present as long as they do not fundamentally alter the properties of the PAEK resin.

The first resin component is a polymer selected from the group comprising polyaryl ether ketones, polyaryl ketones, polyether ketones and polyether ether ketones. Any of the PAEK polymers can be used which will have improved properties through blending with a second resin component according to the present invention. This encompasses the use of one or more polymers from any of the several classes of PAEKs described herein or described in the references cited herein.

For example, several polyaryl ether ketones which are highly crystalline, with melting points above 300 °C, can be used in blends according to the present invention.

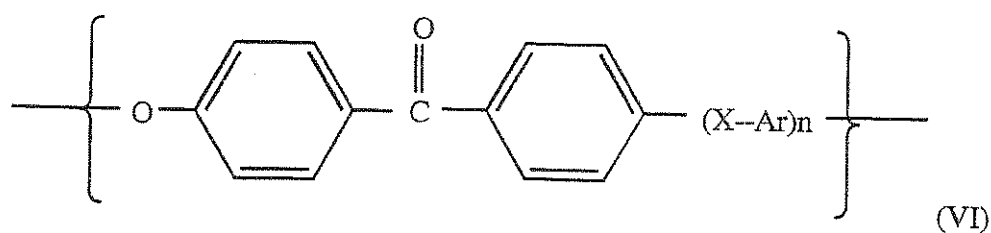
Examples of these crystalline polyaryl ether ketones are shown in the structures I, II, III, IV & V below.





The skilled artisan will know that there is a well-developed and substantial body of patent and other literature directed to formation and properties of polyaryl ether ketones. For example, some of the early work, such as US Patent 3,065,205, involves the electrophilic aromatic substitution (e.g., Friedel-Crafts catalyzed) reaction of aromatic diacyl halides with unsubstituted aromatic compounds such as diphenyl ether. The evolution of this class was achieved in US Patent 4,175,175 which shows that a broad range of resins can be formed, for example, by the nucleophilic aromatic substitution reaction of an activated aromatic dihalide and an aromatic diol or salt thereof.

Other examples of crystalline polyaryl ether ketones which are suitable for use herein can be generically characterized as containing repeating units of the following formula (VI):



wherein Ar is independently a divalent aromatic radical selected from phenylene, biphenylene or naphthylene, X is independently -O-, -C(O)-, -O-Ar-C(O)-, -S-, -SO₂- or a direct bond and n is an integer of from 0 to about 10.

Polyaryl ketones can be prepared by methods well known in the art. One such method comprises heating a substantially equimolar mixture of at least one bisphenol, often reacted as its bis-phenolate salt, and at least one of either a dihalobenzenoid compound or, in other cases, at least one halophenol compound may be reacted to form polymer. In other instances mixtures of these compounds may be used. For example hydroquinone can be reacted with a dihalo aryl ketone, such as dichloro benzophenone or difluoro benzophenone to form a poly aryl ether ketone. In other cases dihydroxy aryl ketone, such as dihydroxy benzophenone can be polymerized with aryl dihalides such as dichloro benzene to form PAEK resins. In still other instances dihydroxy aryl ethers, such as dihydroxy diphenyl ether can be reacted with dihalo aryl ketones, such as difluoro benzophenone. In other variations dihydroxy compounds with no ether linkages, such as or dihydroxy biphenyl or hydroquinone may be reacted with dihalo compounds which may have both ether and ketone linkages, for instance bis-(dichloro phenyl) benzophenone. In other instances diaryl ether carboxylic acids, or carboxylic acid halides can be polymerized to form poly aryl ether ketones. Examples of such compounds are diphenylether carboxylic acid, diphenyl ether carboxylic acid chloride, phenoxy-phenoxy benzoic acid, or mixtures thereof. In still other instances dicarboxylic acids or dicarboxylic acid halides can be condensed with diaryl ethers, for instance iso or tere phthaloyl chlorides (or mixtures thereof) can be reacted with diphenyl ether, to form PAEK resins.

The process as described in, for example, US Patent 4,176,222 may produce polyaryl ether ketones. This process comprises heating in the temperature range of 100 to 400 °C, (i) a substantially equimolar mixture of: (a) at least one bisphenol; and, (b.i) at least one dihalobenzenoid compound, and/or (b.ii) at least one halophenol, in which in the dihalobenzenoid compound or halophenol, the halogen atoms are activated by -C=O- groups ortho or para thereto, with a mixture of sodium carbonate or bicarbonate and a second alkali metal carbonate or bicarbonate, the alkali metal of said second alkali metal carbonate or bicarbonate having a higher atomic number than that of

sodium, the amount of said second alkali metal carbonate or bicarbonate being such that there are 0.001 to 0.2 gram atoms of said alkali metal of higher atomic number per gram atom of sodium, the total amount of alkali metal carbonate or bicarbonate being such that there is at least one alkali metal atom for each phenol group present, and thereafter separating the polymer from the alkali metal halide.

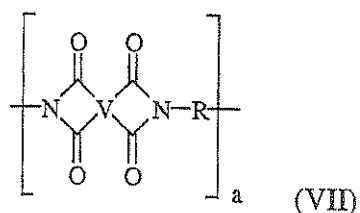
Yet other poly aryl ether ketones may also be prepared according to the process as described in, for example, US Patent 4,396,755. In such processes, reactants such as: (a) a dicarboxylic acid; (b) at least one divalent aromatic radical and at least one mono aromatic dicarboxylic acid and, (c) combinations of (a) and (b), are reacted in the presence of a fluoroalkane sulfonic acid, particularly trifluoromethane sulfonic acid.

Additional polyaryl ether ketones may be prepared according to the process as described in, for example, US Patent 4,398,020 wherein aromatic diacyl compounds are polymerized with at least one aromatic compound and at least one mono acyl halide.

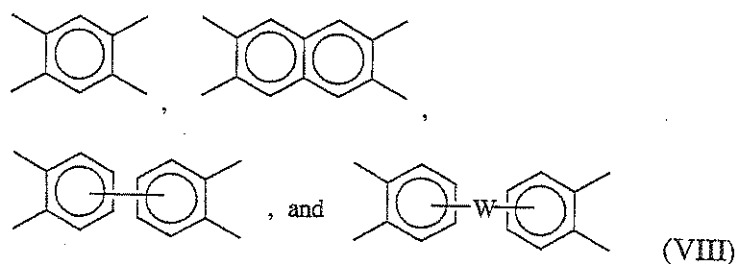
The polyaryl ether ketones may have a reduced viscosity of at least about 0.4 to about 5.0 dl/g, as measured in concentrated sulfuric acid at 25 °C. PAEK weight average molecular weight (Mw) may vary from 5,000 to 150,000 g/mole. In other instances Mw may be from about 10,000-80,000 g/mole.

The term polyaryl ether ketone as used herein is meant to include homopolymers, copolymers, terpolymers, graft copolymers, and the like. Blends of one or more PAEK resins may also be used. Different types of PEAK resins include for example, poly ether ketone (PEK), poly ether ether ketone (PEEK), poly ether ketone ether ketone (PEKEKK) and poly ether ketone ketone (PEKK). PEEK is commercially available from Victrex Ltd. as VICTREX PEEK. PEKEKK resin is commercially available from BASF Co. as ULTRAPEK.

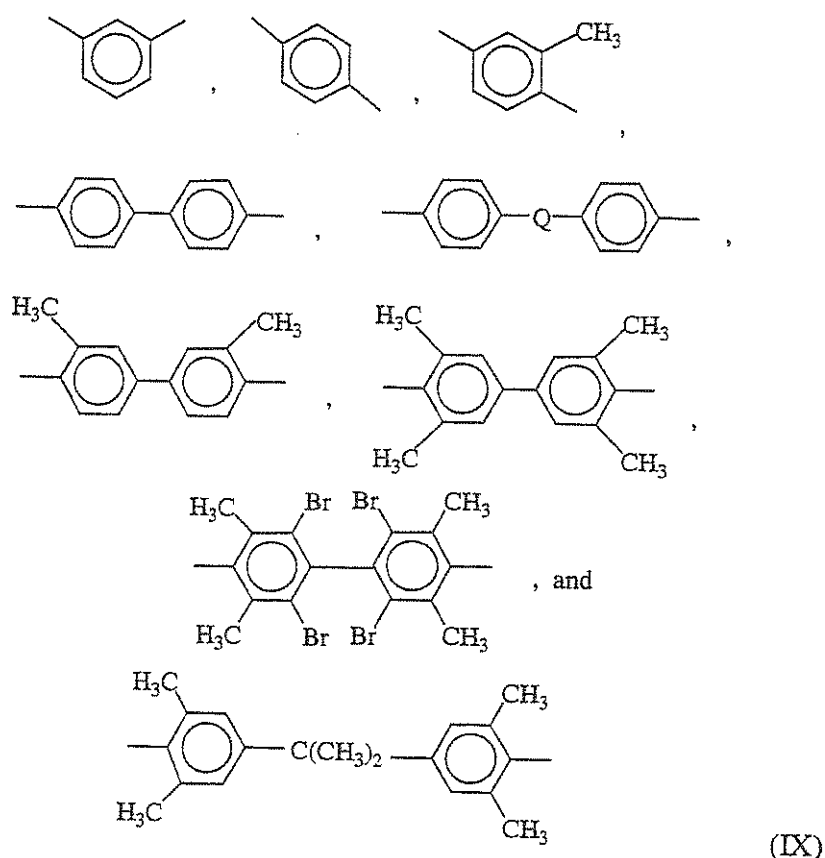
The second resin component is a polysulfone etherimide (PSEI) resin. As used herein the PSEI comprises structural units having the general formula (VII) wherein at least 50 mole% of the polymer linkages have at least one aryl sulfone group and



wherein a is more than 1, typically about 10 to about 1000 or more, and more preferably about 10 to about 500; and V is a tetravalent linker without limitation, as long as the linker does not impede synthesis or use of the polysulfone etherimide. Suitable linkers include but are not limited to: (a) substituted or unsubstituted, saturated, unsaturated or aromatic monocyclic or polycyclic groups having about 5 to about 50 carbon atoms; (b) substituted or unsubstituted, linear or branched, saturated or unsaturated alkyl groups having 1 to about 30 carbon atoms; or (c) combinations thereof. Preferred linkers include but are not limited to tetravalent aromatic radicals of formula (VIII), such as,



wherein W is in some embodiments a divalent moiety selected from the group consisting of $-\text{SO}_2-$, $-\text{O}-$, $-\text{S}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})-$, $\text{C}_y\text{H}_{2y}-$ (y being an integer from 1 to 5), and halogenated derivatives thereof, including perfluoroalkylene groups, or a group of the formula $-\text{O}-\text{D}-\text{O}-$. The group D may comprise the residue of bisphenol compounds. For example, D may be any of the molecules shown in formula IX.

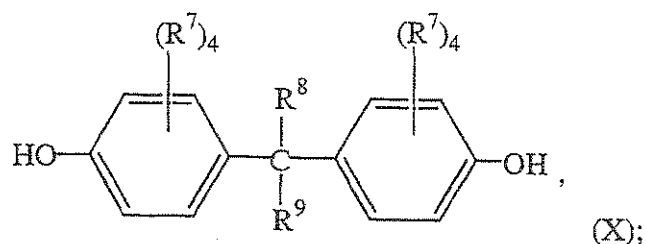


The divalent bonds of the -W- or the -O-D-O- group may be in the 3,3', 3,4', 4,3', or the 4,4' positions. Mixtures of the aforesaid compounds may also be used. Groups free of benzylic protons are often preferred for superior melt stability. Groups where W is -SO₂- are of specific note as they are one method of introducing aryl sulfone linkages into the polysulfone etherimide resins.

In the context of this invention the term "polymer linkage" or "a polymer linkage" is defined as the reaction product of at least two monomers which form the polymer, wherein at least one of the monomers is a dianhydride, or chemical equivalent, and wherein the second monomer is at least one diamine, or chemical equivalent. The polymer is comprised on 100 mole % of such linkages. A polymer which has 50 mole % aryl sulfone linkages, for example, will have half of its linkages (on a molar basis)

comprising dianhydride or diamine derived linkages with at least one aryl sulfone group.

Suitable dihydroxy-substituted aromatic hydrocarbons used as precursors to the -O-D-O- group also include those of the formula (X):



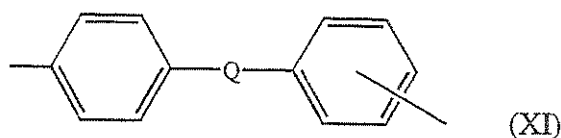
where each R^7 is independently hydrogen, chlorine, bromine, alkoxy, aryloxy or a C_{1-30} monovalent hydrocarbon or hydrocarbonoxy group, and R^8 and R^9 are independently hydrogen, aryl, alkyl fluoro groups or C_{1-30} hydrocarbon groups.

Dihydroxy-substituted aromatic hydrocarbons that may be used as precursors to the -O-D-O- group include those disclosed by name or formula in US Patents 2,991,273, 2,999,835, 3,028,365, 3,148,172, 3,153,008, 3,271,367, 3,271,368, and 4,217,438. Specific examples of dihydroxy-substituted aromatic hydrocarbons which can be used in the present invention include, but are not limited to, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfone, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfide, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl) ether, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfoxide, 1,4-dihydroxybenzene, 4,4'-oxydiphenol, 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)hexafluoropropane, 4,4'-(3,3,5-trimethylcyclohexylidene)diphenol; 4,4'-bis(3,5-dimethyl)diphenol, 1,1-bis(4-hydroxy-3-methylphenyl)cyclohexane; 4,4-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)heptane; 2,4'-dihydroxydiphenylmethane; bis(2-hydroxyphenyl)methane; bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)methane; bis(4-hydroxy-5-nitrophenyl)methane; bis(4-hydroxy-2,6-dimethyl-3-methoxyphenyl)methane; 1,1-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethane; 1,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethane; 1,1-bis(4-hydroxy-2-chlorophenyl)ethane; 2,2-bis(3-phenyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)propane; 2,2-bis(4-hydroxy-3-methylphenyl)propane; 2,2-bis(4-hydroxy-3-ethylphenyl)propane; 2,2-bis(4-hydroxy-3-isopropylphenyl)propane; 2,2-bis(4-hydroxy-3,5-dimethylphenyl)propane; 3,5,3',5'-tetrachloro-4,4'-dihydroxyphenyl)propane; bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)cyclohexylmethane; 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)-1-phenylpropane; 2,4'-

dihydroxyphenyl sulfone; dihydroxy naphthalene; 2,6-dihydroxy naphthalene; hydroquinone; resorcinol; C₁₋₃ alkyl-substituted resorcinols; methyl resorcinol, 1,4-dihydroxy-3-methylbenzene; 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)butane; 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)-2-methylbutane; 1,1-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)cyclohexane; 4,4'-dihydroxydiphenyl; 2-(3-methyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)-2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)propane; 2-(3,5-dimethyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)-2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)propane; 2-(3-methyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)-2-(3,5-dimethyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)propane; bis(3,5-dimethylphenyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)methane; 1,1-bis(3,5-dimethylphenyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)ethane; 2,2-bis(3,5-dimethylphenyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)propane; 2,4-bis(3,5-dimethylphenyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)-2-methylbutane; 3,3-bis(3,5-dimethylphenyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)pentane; 1,1-bis(3,5-dimethylphenyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)cyclopentane; 1,1-bis(3,5-dimethylphenyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)cyclohexane; bis(3,5-dimethyl-4-hydroxyphenyl) sulfoxide, bis(3,5-dimethyl-4-hydroxyphenyl) sulfone and bis(3,5-dimethylphenyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfide. Mixtures comprising any of the foregoing dihydroxy-substituted aromatic hydrocarbons may also be employed.

In a particular embodiment the dihydroxy-substituted aromatic hydrocarbon comprising bisphenols with sulfone linkages are of note as this is another route to introducing aryl sulfone linkages into the polysulfone etherimide resin. In other instances bisphenol compounds free of benzylic protons may be preferred to make polysulfone etherimides with superior melt stability.

In Formula (VII) the R group is the residue of a diamino compound, or chemical equivalent, that includes but is not limited to substituted or unsubstituted divalent organic radicals such as: (a) aromatic hydrocarbon radicals having about 6 to about 24 carbon atoms and halogenated derivatives thereof; (b) straight or branched chain alkylene radicals having about 2 to about 20 carbon atoms; (c) cycloalkylene radicals having about 3 to about 24 carbon atoms, or (d) divalent radicals of the general formula (XI)



wherein Q includes but is not limited to a divalent moiety selected from the group consisting of $-\text{SO}_2-$, $-\text{O}-$, $-\text{S}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})-$, $\text{C}_y\text{H}_{2y}-$ (y being an integer from 1 to 5), and halogenated derivatives thereof, including perfluoroalkylene groups. In particular embodiments R is essentially free of benzylic hydrogens. The presence of benzylic protons can be deduced from the chemical structure.

In some particular embodiments suitable aromatic diamines comprise meta-phenylenediamine; para-phenylenediamine; mixtures of meta- and para-phenylenediamine; isomeric 2-methyl- and 5-methyl-4,6-diethyl-1,3-phenylene-diamines or their mixtures; bis(4-aminophenyl)-2,2-propane; bis(2-chloro-4-amino-3,5-diethylphenyl)methane, 4,4'-diaminodiphenyl, 3,4'-diaminodiphenyl, 4,4'-diaminodiphenyl ether (sometimes referred to as 4,4'-oxydianiline); 3,4'-diaminodiphenyl ether, 3,3'-diaminodiphenyl ether, 4,4'-diaminodiphenyl sulfone, 3,4'-diaminodiphenyl sulfone, 3,3'-diaminodiphenyl sulfone, 4,4'-diaminodiphenyl sulfide; 3,4'-diaminodiphenyl sulfide; 4,4'-diaminodiphenyl ketone, 3,4'-diaminodiphenyl ketone, 4,4'-diaminodiphenylmethane (commonly named 4,4'-methylenedianiline); 4,4'-bis(4-aminophenoxy)biphenyl, 4,4'-bis(3-aminophenoxy)biphenyl, 1,5-diaminonaphthalene; 3,3-dimethylbenzidine; 3,3-dimethoxybenzidine; benzidine; m-xylylenediamine; bis(aminophenoxy)fluorene, bis(aminophenoxy)benzene, 1,3-bis(3-aminophenoxy)benzene, 1,3-bis(4-aminophenoxy)benzene, 1,4-bis(4-aminophenoxy)benzene, bis(aminophenoxy)phenyl sulfone, bis(4-(4-aminophenoxy)phenyl) sulfone, bis(4-(3-aminophenoxy)phenyl) sulfone, diaminobenzanilide, 3,3'-diaminobenzophenone, 4,4'-diaminobenzophenone, 2,2'-bis(4-(4-aminophenoxy)phenyl)propane, 2,2-bis[4-(4-aminophenoxy)phenyl]hexafluoropropane, 4,4'-bis(aminophenyl)hexafluoropropane, 1,3-diamino-4-isopropylbenzene; 1,2-bis(3-aminophenoxy)ethane; 2,4-bis(beta-amino-t-butyl)toluene; bis(p-beta-methyl-o-aminophenyl)benzene; bis(p-beta-amino-t-butylphenyl)ether and 2,4-toluenediamine. Mixtures of two or more diamines may also be employed. Diamino diphenyl sulfone (DDS), bis(aminophenoxy phenyl) sulfones (BAPS) and mixtures thereof are preferred aromatic diamines.

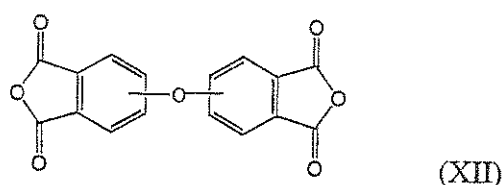
Thermoplastic polysulfone etherimides described herein can be derived from reactants comprising one or more aromatic diamines or their chemically equivalent derivatives and one or more aromatic tetracarboxylic acid cyclic dianhydrides (sometimes referred to hereinafter as aromatic dianhydrides), aromatic tetracarboxylic acids, or their derivatives capable of forming cyclic anhydrides. In addition, at least a portion of one or the other of, or at least a portion of each of, the reactants comprising aromatic diamines and aromatic dianhydrides comprises an aryl sulfone linkage such that at least 50 mole % of the resultant polymer linkages contain at least one aryl sulfone group. In a particular embodiment all of one or the other of, or, each of, the reactants comprising aromatic diamines and aromatic dianhydrides having at least one sulfone linkage. The reactants polymerize to form polymers comprising cyclic imide linkages and sulfone linkages.

Illustrative examples of aromatic dianhydrides include: 4,4'-bis(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)diphenyl sulfone dianhydride; 4,4'-bis(2,3-dicarboxyphenoxy)diphenyl sulfone dianhydride; 4-(2,3-dicarboxyphenoxy)-4'-(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)diphenyl sulfone dianhydride, and mixtures thereof. Other useful aromatic dianhydrides comprise: 2,2-bis(4-(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)phenyl)propane dianhydride; 4,4'-bis(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)diphenyl ether dianhydride; 4,4'-bis(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)diphenyl sulfide dianhydride; 4,4'-bis(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)benzophenone dianhydride; 2,2-bis([4-(2,3-dicarboxyphenoxy)phenyl]propane dianhydride; 4,4'-bis(2,3-dicarboxyphenoxy)diphenyl ether dianhydride; 4,4'-bis(2,3-dicarboxyphenoxy)diphenyl sulfide dianhydride; 4,4'-bis(2,3-dicarboxyphenoxy)benzophenone dianhydride; 2-[4-(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)phenyl]-2-[4-(2,3-dicarboxyphenoxy)phenyl]propane dianhydride; 4-(2,3-dicarboxyphenoxy)-4'-(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)diphenyl ether dianhydride; 4-(2,3-dicarboxyphenoxy)-4'-(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)diphenyl sulfide dianhydride; 4-(2,3-dicarboxyphenoxy)-4'-(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)benzophenone dianhydride; 1,4,5,8-naphthalenetetracarboxylic acid dianhydride; 3,4,3',4'-benzophenonetetracarboxylic acid dianhydride; 2,3,3',4'-benzophenonetetracarboxylic acid dianhydride; 3,4,3',4'-oxydiphthalic anhydride; 2,3,3',4'-oxydiphthalic anhydride; 3,3',4,4'-

biphenyltetracarboxylic acid dianhydride; 2,3,3',4'-biphenyltetracarboxylic acid dianhydride; 2,3,2',3'-biphenyltetracarboxylic acid dianhydride; pyromellitic dianhydride; 3,4,3',4'-diphenylsulfonetetracarboxylic acid dianhydride; 2,3,3',4'-diphenylsulfonetetracarboxylic acid dianhydride; 1,4-bis(3,4-dicarboxyphenoxy)benzene dianhydride; and, 2,2-bis(3,4-dicarboxyphenyl)hexafluoropropane dianhydride. Polysulfone etherimides with structural units derived from mixtures comprising two or more dianhydrides are also within the scope of the invention.

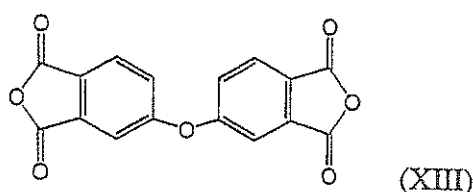
In other instances, the polysulfone etherimides have at least 50 mole % imide linkages derived from an aromatic ether anhydride that is an oxydiphthalic anhydride, in an alternative embodiment, from about 60 mole % to about 100 mole % oxydiphthalic anhydride derived imide linkages. In an alternative embodiment, from about 70 mole % to about 99 mole % of the imide linkages are derived from oxydiphthalic anhydride or chemical equivalent.

The term "oxydiphthalic anhydride" means, for purposes of the embodiments of the present invention, the oxydiphthalic anhydride of the formula (XII)

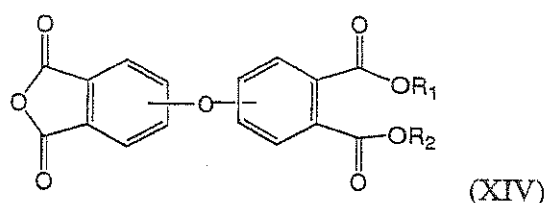


and derivatives thereof as further defined below.

The oxydiphthalic anhydrides of formula (XII) includes 4,4'-oxybisphthalic anhydride, 3,4'-oxybisphthalic anhydride, 3,3'-oxybisphthalic anhydride, and any mixtures thereof. For example, the polysulfone etherimide containing at least 50 mole % imide linkages derived from oxydiphthalic anhydride may be derived from 4,4'-oxybisphthalic anhydride structural units of formula (XIII)

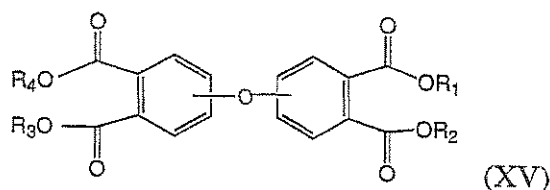


As mentioned above, derivatives of oxydiphthalic anhydrides may be employed to make polysulfone etherimides. Examples of a derivatized anhydride group which can function as a chemical equivalent for the oxydiphthalic anhydride in imide forming reactions, includes oxydiphthalic anhydride derivatives of the formula (XIV)



wherein R_1 and R_2 of formula VII can be any of the following: hydrogen; an alkyl group; an aryl group. R_1 and R_2 can be the same or different to produce an oxydiphthalic anhydride acid, an oxydiphthalic anhydride ester, and an oxydiphthalic anhydride acid ester.

The polysulfone etherimides herein may include imide linkages derived from oxydiphthalic anhydride derivatives which have two derivatized anhydride groups, such as for example, where the oxy diphthalic anhydride derivative is of the formula (XV)

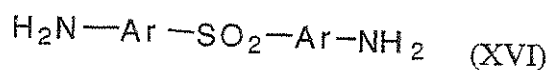


wherein R_1 , R_2 , R_3 and R_4 of formula (XV) can be any of the following: hydrogen; an alkyl group, an aryl group. R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , and R_4 can be the same or different to produce an oxydiphthalic acid, an oxydiphthalic ester, and an oxydiphthalic acid ester.

Copolymers of polysulfone etherimides which include structural units derived from imidization reactions of mixtures of the oxydiphthalic anhydrides listed above having

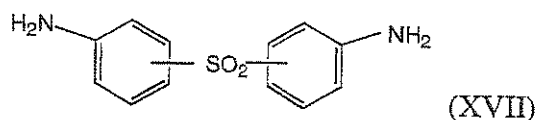
two, three, or more different dianhydrides, and a more or less equal molar amount of an organic diamine with a flexible linkage, are also within the scope of the invention. In addition, copolymers having at least about 50 mole % imide linkages derived from oxy diphthalic anhydrides defined above, which includes derivatives thereof, and up to about 50 mole % of alternative dianhydrides distinct from oxydiphthalic anhydride are also contemplated. That is, in some instances it will be desirable to make copolymers that in addition to having at least about 50 mole % linkages derived from oxydiphthalic anhydride, will also include imide linkages derived from aromatic dianhydrides different than oxydiphthalic anhydrides such as, for example, bisphenol A dianhydride (BPADA), disulfone dianhydride, benzophenone dianhydride, bis (carbophenoxy phenyl) hexafluoro propane dianhydride, bisphenol dianhydride, pyromellitic dianhydride (PMDA), biphenyl dianhydride, sulfur dianhydride, sulfo dianhydride and mixtures thereof.

In another embodiment of the present invention, the dianhydride, as defined above, reacts with an aryl diamine that has a sulfone linkage. In one embodiment the polysulfone etherimide includes structural units that are derived from an aryl diamino sulfone of the formula (XVI)



wherein Ar can be an aryl group species containing a single or multiple rings. Several aryl rings may be linked together, for example through ether linkages, sulfone linkages or more than one sulfone linkages. The aryl rings may also be fused.

In alternative embodiments, the amine groups of the aryl diamino sulfone can be meta or para to the sulfone linkage, for example, as in formula (XVII)



Aromatic diamines include, but are not limited to, for example, diamino diphenyl sulfone (DDS) and bis(aminophenoxy phenyl) sulfones (BAPS). The oxy diphthalic anhydrides described above may be used to form polyimide linkages by reaction with an aryl diamino sulfone to produce polysulfone etherimides.

In some embodiments the polysulfone etherimide resins can be prepared from reaction of an aromatic dianhydride monomer (or aromatic bis(ether anhydride) monomer) with an organic diamine monomer wherein the two monomers are present in essentially equimolar amounts, or wherein one monomer is present in the reaction mixture at no more than about 20% molar excess, and preferably less than about 10% molar excess in relation to the other monomer, or wherein one monomer is present in the reaction mixture at no more than about 5% molar excess. In other instances the monomers will be present in amounts differing by less than 1% molar excess.

Primary monoamines may be used to end-cap or chain-stop the polysulfone etherimide, for example, to control molecular weight. In a particular embodiment primary monoamines comprise aromatic primary monoamines, illustrative examples of which comprise aniline, chloroaniline, perfluoromethyl aniline, naphthyl amines and the like. Aromatic primary monoamines may have additional functionality bound to the aromatic ring: such as, but not limited to, aryl groups, alkyl groups, aryl-alkyl groups, sulfone groups, ester groups, amide groups, halogens, halogenated alkyl or aryl groups, alkyl ether groups, aryl ether groups, or aryl keto groups. The attached functionality should not impede the function of the aromatic primary monoamine to control polysulfone etherimide molecular weight. Suitable monoamine compounds are listed in US Patent 6,919,422.

Aromatic dicarboxylic acid anhydrides, that is aromatic groups comprising one cyclic anhydride group, may also be used to control molecular weight in polyimide sulfones. Illustrative examples comprise phthalic anhydride, substituted phthalic anhydrides, such as chlorophthalic anhydride, and the like. Said anhydrides may have additional functionality bound to the aromatic ring, illustrative examples of which comprise those functionalities described above for aromatic primary monoamines.

In some instances polysulfone etherimides with low levels of isoalkylidene linkages may be desirable. It is believed that in some PAEK blends the presence of isoalkylidene linkages may promote miscibility, which could reduce load bearing capability at high temperature and would be undesirable. Miscible PEEK blends with isoalkylidene containing polymer are described, for example, US Patents 5,079,309 and 5,171,796. In some instances low levels of isoalkylidene groups can mean less than 30 mole % of the polysulfone etherimide linkages will contain isoalkylidene groups, in other instances the polysulfone etherimide linkages will contain less than 20 mole % isoalkylidene groups. In still other instances less than 10 mole % isoalkylidene groups will be present in the polysulfone etherimide linkages.

Polysulfone etherimides may have a melt index of about 0.1 to about 10 grams per minute (g/min), as measured by American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) D1238 at 340-425 °C. In a one embodiment, the polysulfone etherimide resin has a weight average molecular weight (Mw) of about 10,000 to about 150,000 grams per mole (g/mole), as measured by gel permeation chromatography, using a polystyrene standard. In another embodiment the polysulfone etherimide has Mw of 20,000 to 60,000 g/mole. Examples of some polyetherimides are listed in ASTM D5205 "Standard Classification System for Polyetherimide (PEI) Materials".

In some instances, especially where the formation of the film and fiber are desired, the composition should be essentially free of fibrous reinforcement such as glass, carbon, ceramic or metal fibers. Essentially free in some instances means less than 5 wt% of the entire composition. In other cases, the composition should have less than 1wt% fibrous reinforcement present.

In other instances it is useful to have compositions that develop some degree of crystallinity on cooling. This may be more important in articles with high surface area such as fibers and films which will cool off quickly due to their high surface area and may not develop the full crystallinity necessary to get optimal properties. In some instances the formation of crystallinity is reflected in the crystallization temperature (T_c), which can be measured by a methods such as differential scanning calorimetry (DSC), for example, ASTM method D3418. The temperature of the maximum rate of

crystallization may be measured as the T_c . In some instances, for example at a cooling rate of $80\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{min.}$, it may be desirable have a T_c of greater than or equal to about $240\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$. In other instances, for example a slower cooling rate of $20\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{min.}$, a crystallization temperature of greater than or equal to about $280\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ may be desired.

In some instances the composition of the invention will have at least two distinct glass transition temperatures (T_g), a first T_g from the PAEK resin, or a partially miscible PAEK blend, and a second T_g associated with the polysulfone etherimide resin, or mixture where such resin predominates. These glass transition temperatures (T_g s) can be measured by any convention method such as DSC or dynamic mechanical analysis (DMA). In some instances the first T_g can be from 120 to about $200\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ and the second T_g can be from 240 to $350\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$. In other instances it may be useful to have an even higher second T_g , from 280 to about $350\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$. In some instances, depending of the specific resins, molecular weights and composition of the blend, the T_g s may be distinct or the transitions may partially overlap.

In another embodiment the polysulfone etherimide PAEK blends will have melt viscosity that ranges from about 200 Pascal-seconds to about $10,000$ Pascal-seconds ($\text{Pa}\cdot\text{s}$) at 380°C as measured by ASTM method D3835 using a capillary rheometer with a shear rate of 100 to $10000\text{ }1/\text{sec}$. Resin blends having a melt viscosity from about 200 Pascal-seconds to about $10,000$ Pascal-seconds at 380°C will allow the composition of the invention to be more readily formed into articles of the invention using melt processing techniques. In other instances a lower melt viscosity of from about 200 to $5,000\text{ Pa}\cdot\text{s}$ will be useful.

Another aspect of melt processing, especially at the high temperature needed for the PAEK-polysulfone etherimide compositions described herein, is that the melt viscosity of the composition not undergo excessive change during the molding or extrusion process. One method to measure melt stability is to examine the change in viscosity vs. time at a processing temperature, for example 380°C using a parallel plate rheometer. In some instances at least 50% on the initial viscosity should be retained after being held at temperature for at least about 10 minutes. In other instances the melt viscosity change should be less than about 35% of the initial value

for at least about 10 minutes. The initial melt viscosity values can be measured from 1 to 5 minutes after the composition has melted and equilibrated. It is common to wait 1-5 minutes after heat is applied to the sample before measuring (recording) viscosity to ensure the sample is fully melted and equilibrated. Suitable methods for measuring melt viscosity vs. time are, for example, ASTM method D4440. Note that melt viscosity can be reported in poise (P) or Pascal seconds (Pa-s); $1\text{Pa-s} = 10\text{P}$.

The compositions of the invention can be formed into articles by any number of methods. Preferred methods include, for example, injection molding, blow molding, compression molding, profile extrusion, sheet or film extrusion, sintering, gas assist molding, structural foam molding and thermoforming. Examples of such articles include, but are not limited to, cookware, food service items, medical devices, trays, plates, handles, helmets, animal cages, electrical connectors, enclosures for electrical equipment, engine parts, automotive engine parts, bearings, lighting sockets and reflectors, electric motor parts, power distribution equipment, communication equipment, computers and the like, including devices that have molded in snap fit connectors. The blends can also be used as fibers. In addition the blends can be used as coatings, for example powder coatings. The PAEK blends can also be extruded into rods and slabs that can be used to form articles by machining.

The compositions of the invention can also be combined with various additives including, but not limited to, colorants such as titanium dioxide, zinc sulfide and carbon black; stabilizers such as hindered phenols, phosphites, phosphonites, thioesters and mixtures thereof, as well as mold release agents, lubricants, metal deactivators, plasticizers, nucleating agents such as talc, wear resistant additives, such as fluoro polymers and metal sulfides, flame retardants, smoke suppressors and anti-drip agents, for example, those based on fluoro polymers. Use of phosphonate or phosphite compounds or mixtures thereof may be desired in some instances to improve color and stability. In another instance aryl phosphonate, phosphite compounds or mixtures thereof or in combination with hindered phenol antioxidants may be employed. Ultraviolet light stabilizers can also be added to the compositions in effective amounts. All the aforesaid additives are known in the art, as are their effective levels and methods of incorporation. Effective amounts of the additives

vary widely, but they are usually present in an amount up to about 0.01- 30% or more by weight, based on the weight of the entire composition and they type of additive used.

Compositions discussed herein may be converted to articles using common thermoplastic processes such as film and sheet extrusion. Film and sheet extrusion processes may include and are not limited to melt casting, blown film extrusion and calendering. Films may range from 0.1 to 1000 microns in some instances. Co-extrusion and lamination processes may be employed to form composite multi-layer films or sheets. Single or multiple layers of coatings may further be applied to the single or multi-layer substrates to impart additional properties such as scratch resistance, ultra violet light resistance, aesthetic appeal, etc. Coatings may be applied through standard application techniques such as rolling, spraying, dipping, brushing, or flow coating. Film and sheet may alternatively be prepared by casting a solution or suspension of the composition in a suitable solvent onto a substrate, belt or roll followed by removal of the solvent. Films may also be metallized using standard processes such as sputtering, vacuum deposition and lamination with foil.

Oriented films may be prepared through blown film extrusion or by stretching cast or calendered films in the vicinity of the thermal deformation temperature using conventional stretching techniques. For instance, a radial stretching pantograph may be employed for multi-axial simultaneous stretching; an x-y direction stretching pantograph can be used to simultaneously or sequentially stretch in the planar x-y directions. Equipment with sequential uniaxial stretching sections can also be used to achieve uniaxial and biaxial stretching, such as a machine equipped with a section of differential speed rolls for stretching in the machine direction and a tenter frame section for stretching in the transverse direction.

Compositions discussed herein may be converted to multiwall sheet comprising a first sheet having a first side and a second side, wherein the first sheet comprises a thermoplastic polymer, and wherein the first side of the first sheet is disposed upon a first side of a plurality of ribs; and a second sheet having a first side and a second side, wherein the second sheet comprises a thermoplastic polymer, wherein the first

side of the second sheet is disposed upon a second side of the plurality of ribs, and wherein the first side of the plurality of ribs is opposed to the second side of the plurality of ribs.

The films and sheets described above may further be thermoplastically processed into shaped articles via forming and molding processes including but not limited to thermoforming, vacuum forming, pressure forming, injection molding and compression molding. Multi-layered shaped articles may also be formed by injection molding a thermoplastic resin onto a single or multi-layer film or sheet substrate as described below:

- 1) Providing a single or multi-layer thermoplastic substrate having optionally one or more colors on the surface, for instance, using screen printing of a transfer dye.
- 2) Conforming the substrate to a mold configuration such as by forming and trimming a substrate into a three dimensional shape and fitting the substrate into a mold having a surface which matches the three dimensional shape of the substrate.
- 3) Injecting a thermoplastic resin into the mold cavity behind the substrate to (i) produce a one-piece permanently bonded three-dimensional product or (ii) transfer a pattern or aesthetic effect from a printed substrate to the injected resin and remove the printed substrate, thus imparting the aesthetic effect to the molded resin.

Those skilled in the art will also appreciate that common curing and surface modification processes including and not limited to heat-setting, texturing, embossing, corona treatment, flame treatment, plasma treatment and vacuum deposition may further be applied to the above articles to alter surface appearances and impart additional functionalities to the articles. Accordingly, another embodiment of the invention relates to articles, sheets and films prepared from the compositions above.

Without further elaboration, it is believed that one skilled in the art can, using the description herein, utilize the present invention. The following examples are included

to provide addition guidance to those skilled in the art of practicing the claimed invention. The examples provided are merely representative of the work and contribute to the teaching of the present invention. Accordingly, these examples are not intended to limit the invention in any manner.

All patents and/or patent applications cited herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety as though set forth in full.

EXAMPLES

Blends are prepared by extrusion of mixtures of the polyaryl ether ketone, PEEK with polysulfone etherimides in a 30 mm twin-screw extruder. Compositions are listed in wt% of the total composition. The extruder was set at about 380 to 425 °C. The blends are run at about 200 rpm under vacuum using mild mixing screws. The extrudate is cooled, pelletized and dried at 150 °C. Test samples are injection molded at a set temperature of 370-410 °C and mold temperature of 120 °C using a 30 sec. cycle time.

Some properties are measured using ASTM test methods. All molded samples are conditioned for at least 48h at 50% relative humidity prior to testing. Reverse notched Izod impact values are measured at room temperature on 3.2 mm thick bars as per ASTM D256. Heat distortion temperature (HDT) is measured at 0.46 MPa (66 psi) on 3.2 mm thick bars as per ASTM D648. Tensile properties are measured on 3.2 mm type I bars as per ASTM method D638. Flexural properties are measured on 3.2 mm bars as per ASTM method D790. Vicat temperature is measured at 50N as per ASTM method D1525. Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) is run as per ASTM method D3418, but using different heating and cooling rates. Samples are heated at 20 °C/min to 350 °C and cooled at either 20 or 80 °C/min. to record peak crystallization temperature (T_c). Dynamic Mechanical Analysis (DMA) is run in flexure on 3.2 mm bars at a heating rate of 3 °C/min. with an oscillatory frequency of at 1 Hertz. DMA tests are run from about 30 to about 300 °C as per ASTM method D5418. Viscosity vs. shear rate is measured on a capillary rheometer using a 1x10 mm die at 380 °C as per ASTM method D3835. Pellets of the blends are dried at 150 °C for at least 3 hrs before testing using a parallel plate rheometer at 10 radians/sec. the change in melt

viscosity at 380 °C is measured vs. time after a 5 minute melting and equilibration period. MVR (melt volume rate) was measured as cc/10 minutes at 380 °C.

Materials

PEEK is the polyether ether ketone sold by Victrex Co, as VICTREX 450G.

PEI-1 is a polyetherimide made by reaction of bisphenol-A dianhydride (BPADA) with about an equal molar amount of m-phenylene diamine, sold by General Electric Plastic as ULTEM 1000, Mw ~38,300.

PEI-2 is a polyetherimide made by reaction of bisphenol-A dianhydride (BPADA) with about an equal molar amount of m-phenylene diamine, sold by General Electric Plastic as ULTEM 1010, Mw ~33,200.

PSEI-1 is a polysulfone etherimide made by reaction of 4,4'-oxydiphthalic anhydride (ODPA) with about an equal molar amount of 4,4'-diamino diphenyl sulfone (DDS), Mw ~33,000.

PSEI-2 is a polysulfone etherimide copolymer made by reaction of a mixture of about 80 mole % 4,4'-oxydiphthalic anhydride (ODPA) and about 20 mole % of bisphenol-A dianhydride (BPADA) with about an equal molar amount of 4,4'-diamino diphenyl sulfone (DDS), Mw ~ 28,000.

PSEI-3 is a polysulfone etherimide made from reaction of bisphenol-A dianhydride (BPADA) with about an equal molar amount of 4,4'-diamino diphenyl sulfone (DDS), Mw ~ 34,000.

Note that letters designate comparative examples while numbers designate examples of the invention.

Examples A, B, 1 & 2. Table 1 shows blends of a crystalline PEEK resin with a polyetherimide (PEI) as well as two polysulfone etherimide (PSEI) resins. Example A shows the properties of the PEEK resin with no added ingredients, note the low HDT at 66 psi. Addition of a 50 wt% polyetherimide gives only a modest increase in the HDT. On the other hand example 1, which blends 40wt% of a polysulfone etherimide

made from reaction of ODPA with DDS (PSEI-1) increases HDT by 94 °C to 245 °C. As shown other mechanical properties, for example modulus, strength and reversed Izod impact are increased compared to the appropriate control. A polysulfone etherimide copolymer containing linkages derived from a 80:20 mole % mixture of ODPA:BPADA polymerized with DDS (PSEI-2 resin, example 2) also shows a substantial increase in the 66 psi HDT by over 67 °C, to 218 °C.

Table 1

Examples	A	B	1	2
PEEK Victrex 450 G	100	50	60	50
PEI-1	0	50	0	0
PSEI-1	0	0	40	0
PSEI-2	0	0	0	50
Vicat 50 N °C	264	169	> 270	257
HDT 66 psi °C	151	168	245	218
T. Mod Kpsi	597	534	629	467
T. Str. Kpsi	12.9	14.4	13.0	13.4
Flex Mod. Kpsi	499	490	519	463
Flex. Str. Kpsi	19.6	21.6	21.9	20.7
RN Izod Impact ft-lbs/in	19.6	40.3	39.1	40.3

Figure 1 shows the storage modulus of PEEK (example A), a 50:50 PEEK:PEI-1 blend (example B), a 60:40 PEEK: PSEI-1 blend (example 1) and a 50:50 PEEK:PSEI-2 blend (example 2). The unmodified PEEK blend, sample A, shows a very large drop in modulus at the PEEK T_g at about 150 °C, dropping from about 2000 to about 190 MPa. Addition of PEI-1 increases the modulus beyond that of the PEEK control A, however after about 180 °C sample B shows a rapid loss of stiffness (modulus) essentially losing all load bearing capability by melting. At temperatures

above about 180 C sample B has less load bearing capability then the PEEK control (sample A)

Examples of the invention 1 and 2 show an increase in modulus at temperatures beyond about 150 °C. The unblended PEEK resin has modulus at 200 °C of about 189 Mpa while the polysulfone etherimide blends 1 and 2 show a modulus at 200 °C of about 598 and 699 Mpa indicating increased load bearing capability at high temperature. A comparison of the modulus for examples A, B, 1 and 2 at several temperatures is also shown in table 2. Note how the polysulfone etherimide blends with the polyaryl ketone show much higher stiffness at higher temperatures, increasing the load bearing capability of the blend at temperature above, for example 250 °C.

Table 2

Modulus (MPa)				
Temp.	A	B	1	2
150 C	651	2039	1243	1269
175 C	206	772	645	718
200 C	189	8	598	699
225 C	173	sample softened	556	645
250 C	173	sample softened	556	645
275 C	136	sample softened	435	177

Examples C & 3. Table 3 shows blends of PEEK containing 1 wt % of a crystallization agent, talc. Control example C using a PEI with no sulfone linkages, shows a relatively low 66 psi HDT of 169 °C even when the crystallization agent talc is added. The Vicat temperature of control example C is also relatively low at 177 °C.

On the other hand, use of the polysulfone etherimide (PSEI-1) in the poly aryl ether ketone blend increases the 66 psi HDT and Vicat temperatures by almost 100 °C over control sample C.

Table 3

Examples	C	3
PEEK	49	49
PEI-1	50	0
PSEI-1	0	50
Talc	1.0	1.0
Vicat 50 N °C	177	> 270
HDT 66 psi	169	262
HDT 264 psi	160	161
T. Str (Y) Mpa	94.2	103.5
T. Mod Mpa	3474	4269

The viscosity vs. shear rate and melt volume rate (MVR) for example 3 shown in table 4 was measured on a capillary rheometer at 380 °C with shear rates from 100 to 10,000 1/sec. The PSEI-PEEK blend has a melt viscosity of from 2438 to 223 Pa-s. While this is higher than the control sample C, the PSEI viscosity still shows good melt processability of the high heat load bearing PSEI-PEEK blends, indicating utility for melt forming processes such as fiber and film extrusion and injection molding.

Table 4

Examples	C	3
Rate 1/sec.	Visc.Pa-s	Visc.Pa-s
100	966	2438
200	772	1865
640	487	1106
1000	396	883
2000	280	606
5000	166	351
10000	107	223
MVR cc/.10 min	5.7	1.5

Viscosity @ 380 °C

The blend of examples 2 and 3 were melted in a parallel plate rheometer and held at 380 °C as a function of time at a constant shear rate of about 10 radian/sec. Viscosity was measured in Pascal-seconds (Pa-s) using a method based on ASTM D4440. The blends were allowed to melt and equilibrate for 5 minutes and then viscosity was recorded. The viscosity recorded after 1 minute, (a total of 6 minutes after the blends was melted and equilibrated, was used a baseline. During time at temperature the blend showed a drop in viscosity as shown in table 5, however even after 10 minutes at 380 °C the blend still retained over 70% of the initial (1 minute) melt viscosity showing acceptable stability for melt processing even at this high temperature. The % retention of the initial one minute viscosity is shown for each example along with the actual viscosity values in Pascal-seconds.

Table 5

	Example 2		Example 3	
Min. @380 °C	Visc. Pa-s	% Original value	Visc. Pa-s	% Original value
1	3750	100	3009	100
3	3440	91.7	2905	96.5
5	3280	87.4	2968	98.6
8	2950	78.7	2979	99.0
10	2760	73.6	2937	97.6

Examples D, E, F & 4 to 9. Table 6 shows the rate of crystallization for various PEEK blends as measured by differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) with cooling rates of 20 and 80 °C/min. Note that the control samples D and E show no detectable crystallization when cooled at 80 °C/min. whereas the polysulfone etherimide blends, 4 to 9, all show a crystallization temperatures above 250 °C. At the slower cooling rate, 20 °C/min., control sample D still does not crystallize. Control sample E with higher PEEK content shows some crystallization at 270 °C, but the PSEI blends 4-9 all show a higher crystallization temperature (≥ 280 °C). Note that the blends of PEEK with the ODPA containing polysulfone etherimides, examples 8 & 9, show a crystallization temperature the same or higher than the PEEK polymer with no additive (control sample F).

Table 6

Examples	D	E	F	4	5	6	7	8	9
PEEK	40	50	100	30	40	60	70	50	60
PEI-2	60	50							
PSEI-3				70	60	40	30		
PSEI-2								50	
PSEI-1									40
Tc 80 °C/min	nd	nd	274	255	259	260	270	275	278
Tc 20 °C/min	nd	270	296	280	283	285	289	296	297

nd = not detected

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A phase separated polymer blend comprising a mixture of: a) a first resin component selected from one or more of the group comprising: polyaryl ether ketones, polyaryl ketones, polyether ketones and polyether ether ketones with b) a second resin component comprising at least one polysulfone etherimide having greater than or equal to 50 mole% of the polymer linkages containing at least one aryl sulfone group.
2. The composition of claim 1 wherein the polysulfone etherimide contains aryl sulfone and aryl ether linkages such that at least 50 mole % of the repeat units of the polysulfone etherimide contain at least one aryl ether linkage, at least one aryl sulfone linkage and at least two aryl imide linkages.
3. The composition of claim 1 wherein at least 50 mole% of the polysulfone etherimide linkages are derived from oxydiphthalic anhydride or a chemical equivalent thereof.
4. The composition of claim 1 wherein less than 30 mole% of polysulfone etherimide linkages are derived from a diamine or dianhydride containing an isoalkylidene group.
5. The composition of claim 1 having a heat distortion temperature (HDT) of greater than or equal to 170 °C, measured as per ASTM method D648 at 66 psi (0.46 Mpa) on a 3.2 mm sample.
6. The composition of claim 1 wherein the polysulfone etherimide is present from 30-70 wt% of the whole composition.
7. A composition of claim 1 with less than 5 wt% fibrous reinforcement.
8. The composition of claim 1 having a modulus of greater than about 200 Mpa at 200 °C, as measured by ASTM D5418, on a 3.2 mm sample.
9. The composition of claim 1 having a melt viscosity, as measured by ASTM method D3835 at 380 °C from 200 -10,000 Pascal-seconds.

10. The composition of claim 9 wherein the melt viscosity does not change by more than 35% of its initial value after 10 minutes at 380 °C.
11. The composition of claim 1 wherein the polysulfone etherimide is essentially free of benzylic protons.
12. The composition of claim 1 wherein the polyaryl ether ketones, polyaryl ketones, polyether ketones, and polyether ether ketones have a crystalline melting point from 300 to 380 °C.
13. The composition of claim 1 wherein the polysulfone etherimide has a glass transition temperature (T_g), from 240 to 350 °C.
14. The composition of claim 1 having at least two glass transition temperatures, as measured by ASTM method D5418, wherein the first glass transition temperature is from 120-200 °C and the second glass transition temperature is from 240 – 350 °C.
15. The composition of claim 14 wherein the second glass transition temperature is from about 280 to about 350 °C.
16. The composition of claim 1 wherein the crystallization temperature, as measured from a molten polymer mixture cooled at a rate of 80 °C/min., is greater than or equal to about 250 °C.
17. A composition according to claim 1 wherein one or more properties of the polymer blend is higher than the corresponding property of resin component one and resin component two.
18. An article made from the composition of claim 1.
19. The article of claim 18, which is selected from the group consisting of: sheets, films, multilayer sheets, multilayer films, molded parts, extruded profiles, fibers, coated parts and foams.