

A formulary of detergents and other cleaning agents

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Detergent: A Powerful Cleaning Agent**

Introduction

Detergents are versatile cleaning agents widely used in households and industries. They play a crucial role in removing dirt, stains, and other impurities from various surfaces. Understanding the composition and properties of detergents is essential for their effective utilization.

Cleaning Agents in Detergents

The primary cleaning agents in detergents are known as surfactants (surface-active agents). Surfactants are molecules that have both hydrophobic (water-repelling) and hydrophilic (water-loving) regions. This unique molecular structure allows them to interact with both water and non-polar substances such as dirt and oil.

Use of Detergents

Detergents are used in a wide range of applications, including:

- Laundry: Removing dirt, stains, and odors from clothing
- Dishwashing: Cleaning dishes, utensils, and glasses
- Surface cleaning: Removing dirt and grime from floors, countertops, and other surfaces
- Industrial cleaning: Cleaning equipment, vehicles, and machinery

Formulation of a Detergent

The formulation of a detergent typically includes:

- Surfactants (cleaning agents)
- Builders (alkaline substances that soften water and enhance surfactant performance)
- Enzymes (biological catalysts that break down specific stains)
- Brighteners (optical agents that make colors appear brighter)
- Fragrances (mask odors and provide a pleasant scent)

Types of Cleaning Agents

Cleaning agents can be classified into three main categories:

- **Surfactants:** These are the primary cleaning agents in detergents.
- **Alkalis:** Substances such as sodium hydroxide and sodium carbonate that neutralize acids and increase the pH of the solution.
- **Acids:** Substances such as hydrochloric acid and acetic acid that neutralize bases and decrease the pH of the solution.

Most Powerful Cleaning Agent

The most powerful cleaning agent is hydrofluoric acid. However, it is highly corrosive and must be handled with extreme caution.

Cleaning Ingredient in Laundry Detergent

The cleaning ingredient in laundry detergent is typically a surfactant known as sodium dodecylbenzene sulfonate (SDBS).

Cleansing Agent in Soap and Detergent

Both soap and detergent contain surfactants as their cleansing agents. Soap is made from the reaction of fats or oils with an alkali, while detergents are synthetically produced.

Cleaning Agent in Liquid Soap

The cleaning agent in liquid soap is also a surfactant. Common surfactants used in liquid soap include sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS) and sodium laureth sulfate (SLES).

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A FORMULARY OF DETERGENTS AND OTHER CLEANING AGENTS

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