

Soft touch for automobile interiors

Sekisui Alveo introduces new ultra-soft PP foam

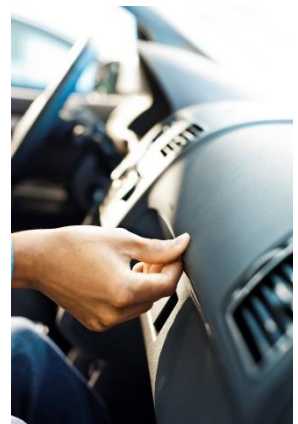
Lucerne, June 2017 – Sekisui Alveo has introduced a new grade of ultra-soft foam: Alveolit TP SE. The manufacturer of high-quality crosslinked polyolefin foams has significantly improved upon its first-generation product to create this PP foam which is ideal for automotive interior applications. Alveolit TP SE is the company's softest foam for interior components, fully in line with the current trend towards very soft and luxurious interior trim surfaces and materials that enhance the brand value of the automobile.

New second-generation soft PP foam

Officially launched late in 2016, Alveolit TP SE is the second-generation soft PP foam made by Sekisui Alveo. The material is more than 30% softer than its predecessor, the well-known Alveolit TP EE. Alveolit TP SE is specially engineered for interior trim applications such as dashboards, armrests, door panels and door roll uppers.

Combining softness with thermal resistance

Interior trim applications require high thermal stability – 120°C and higher for dashboards – which limits the material choice to PP-based materials. The problem is, these are usually not very soft. With Alveolit TP SE, Sekisui Alveo has managed to combine the superior thermal properties of PP foam with the softness associated with PE foam, creating the ideal foam for all interior applications. The foam possesses excellent thermal stability across the entire temperature range from -40°C to 130°C.



A softer touch for comfortable interiors with Alveolit TP SE

Excellent converting properties

The great news is that this technical development does not come at the expense of the material's conversion properties. The foam is typically laminated with TPO or PVC films or textiles by customers. It is ideal for conversion methods like vacuum forming (including in-mould graining), press forming, and die cutting as well as surface treatments. And for hand-wrapped leather components, the material gives perfect results due to its excellent workability.

Look and feel of quality

The material possesses a smooth and uniform surface on both sides, which ensures very good lamination with other materials. This results in components with well-defined edges and smooth, soft surfaces. The ultra-soft foam is easy to compress and shows very good compressive rebound. The crisp detailing, perfect form and comfortable feel of the components result in high-quality and elegant interiors, enhancing the brand value of the automobile.

Full spectrum of required properties

The new foam meets all the requirements for automotive applications and possesses additional properties that enhance the comfort and performance of the vehicle, including thermal insulation, special look and feel, and low moisture absorption. It meets all standard limits for automotive interior emissions as well as standards for VOCs, fogging and odours. Compared with non-generic material solutions like PVC and PUR foams, Alveolit TP SE offers attractive weight-saving potential and easier conversion options.

Proven in the lab and on the road

Application test results for the new foam have been positive. The material has proven stable at extended temperatures of up to 130°C. Alveolit TP SE has already been proven in automotive

interior trim applications, being used under leather, foil and cloth in many interiors of a famous Italian sports car manufacturer. Other major automotive brands are preparing to use the foam in serial production as well.

Applications beyond the automotive industry

Alveolit TP SE is also a good choice for seals and gaskets wherever high temperature stability is required. For instance, a renowned manufacturer of household appliances uses it for seals in vacuum cleaners. Further potential is seen in hard-soft composites with other PP foam products for use in consumer goods.

Local European foam partner

Alveolit TP SE is available in thicknesses from 1 to 4mm, and Sekisui Alveo plans to expand the range up to 6mm. The company can offer various densities to meet special customer requirements regarding softness, conversion properties and compression recovery. Sekisui Alveo is a leading provider of innovative foams, with products made in Europe and local support across Europe.

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Sekisui Alveo AG – Company profile

Sekisui Alveo AG, with head office in Lucerne, Switzerland, develops and produces extruded and crosslinked polyolefin foams used in various industries: Adhesive Coating, Automotive, Construction including Artificial Turf as well as Industrial and Consumer Goods. The solutions are developed in close cooperation with processing companies and manufacturers, and tested and approved in the company's in-house Application Service Laboratory.

Sekisui Alveo was established in 1971 and today employs 500 people. Besides the head office in Switzerland and the two production plants in Roermond (Netherlands) and Bad Sobernheim (Germany), the company has local offices throughout Europe. Sekisui Alveo is owned by Sekisui Chemical Co. Ltd.

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