COPOLYMER SEALANT COMPOSITIONS AND METHOD FOR MAKING

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References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS
3,109,826 A 11/1963 Smith et al.
3,202,634 A * 8/1965 Merker ....................... 528/35
3,666,718 A 5/1972 Patterson et al.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

ABSTRACT
Condensation curable poly(fluoroorganosiloxane)-poly(silarylene)poly(siloxane) block copolymer compositions having a glass transition temperature not exceeding about -54°C and excellent solvent resistance have been found useful as sealants. Polyalkoxysilylorganosiloxanes, such as 1,4-bis[trimethoxysilyl(ethyl)]benzene have been found to be effective as cross-linkers.

13 Claims, No Drawings
The present invention is based on work sponsored under NASA's High Speed Research Contract NASI 20220, with Boeing under subcontract ZA0073 Task 22, Subtask 4.2.2.4.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to copolymer compositions useful in the preparation of fuel tank sealants. More particularly, the present invention relates to condensation curable poly(fluoroorganosiloxane)-poly(silarylene) siloxane block copolymer compositions and the use of polyalkoxysilylorganic compounds as cross-linkers to facilitate the condensation cure of poly(fluoroorganosiloxane)-poly(silarylene)siloxane block copolymers.

As described by Smith, U.S. Pat. No. 3,109,826, bis(alkoxysilyl) hydrocarbons, such as 1,2-bis(triethoxysilyl)ethane, can be used as cross-linkers in combination with a metal salt to effect the neutral condensation cure of hydroxy end-blocked polydiorganosiloxanes. However, the resulting cured silicone compositions have been found to be problematic as aircraft fuel tank sealants, as they do not have the required solvent or fuel resistance. It is known that fluorosilicones, for example, made by polymerizing tris[(trifluoropropyl)methyl]cyclosiloxane, can provide excellent fuel resistance. However, fluorosilicones often do not meet the wide temperature stability requirements needed in aircraft sealants, such as temperatures in a range between -54°C and 177°C over an extended period of time. In addition, fluorosilicones are subject to depolymerization which can result in the formation of low molecular weight cyclics.

In an effort to enhance the thermal stability of fluorosilicones, non-siloxane groups, such as p-silphenylene, have been inserted into the polyfluoroorganosiloxane backbone, as described by Grassie and Beattie, “The Thermal Degradation of Polysiloxanes: Part 7”, Polymer Degradation and Stabilization 8:177-193 (1984). It is also reported by Dvornic and Lenz, Macromolecules, 25, 3769 (1992), that copolymers having a glass transition temperature (Tg) of -51°C can be made by reacting methyl(3,3,3-trifluoropropy1)benzene. A bis(diorganohydroxysilyl)arylene, or “bis(hydroxysilyl)arylene” is shown by the formula,

\[
\text{HO}-(\text{R}')(\text{R'})\text{SiO}_{1.4}\text{SiO}-(\text{R}')(\text{R'})\text{O}-
\]

while fluorosilicones having improved thermal stability have been made by inserting non-siloxane groups, such as p-silphenylene into the polyfluoroorganosiloxane backbone, such copolymers have been found to have a glass transition temperature which does not satisfy the minimum -54°C Tg flexibility requirements of aircraft fuel tank sealants.

Experience also has shown that in addition to being sensitive to depolymerization, condensation curable fluorosilicone compositions often suffer from an incomplete cure using a conventional curing catalyst, such as a tin salt, and a standard neutral condensation curable cross-linker, for example a polyalkoxysiloxane. One possible explanation, as discussed by Fujiki, U.S. Pat. No. 5,236,997, is that the steric hindrance or electronic effects of bulky terminal triluoropropyl groups inhibit crosslinking of the network.

Accordingly, depolymerization resistant silicone base copolymers which could be compounded to a fuel resistant condensation curable silicone composition compatible to the elastomeric state upon cure exhibiting stability over an operable temperature in a range between about -54°C or below and at least about 177°C over an extended period of time are constantly being sought which also exhibit low temperature flexibility, in addition to high temperature stability.
and preferably in a range between about 1 and about 2 moles, per mole of bis(diorganohydroxysilyl)arylene. Reaction to form the copolymer is typically effected with agitation under neat conditions or in the presence of an inert organic solvent, for example, toluene, at temperatures in a range between about 60° C. and about 150° C. Reaction is typically effected for a time period in a range between about 30 minutes and about 2 hours, and preferably, in a range between about 45 minutes and about 1.5 hours. It is preferred to operate within an inert atmosphere, for example, under a nitrogen blanket. Typically, there is also present an initiator, for example, an alkali hydroxide (e.g. sodium hydroxide) or an alkali fluorosilicate (e.g. sodium fluorosilicate) in a range between about 5 parts and about 15 parts by weight per 100 parts of block copolymer, including chemically combined blocks of (fluoroorgano)siloxane-poly(silarylene)siloxane containing the formula,

$\left[ (OR)_n(X\text{ modifier})_i \right]_m$.

where $Q$ is a $C_{2-12}$ divalent organic radical, $R$ is as previously defined, and $X$ is a member selected from the group consisting of $R$ and $RO$. Some of the $C_{2-12}$ divalent hydrocarbon radicals included within $Q$ are dialkyle radicals such as dimethylylene, trimethylylene, tetramethylylene, pentamethylylene, and hexamethylylene. Also included are divalent arylene radicals, for example, phenylene, tolylene, xylylene and naphthylene. Divalent aromatic radicals included within $Q$ are for example phenylene, tolylene, xylylene and naphthylene.

The cross-linker can be used in combination with an effective amount of a condensation catalyst, such as a tin compound, to effect the neutral condensation cure of block copolymers comprising blocks of poly(fluoroorgano) organosiloxane units chemically combined with poly(silylarylene)siloxane groups. The block copolymers are referred to as “polyfluoroorganosiloxane-poly(silylarylene) siloxane block copolymers”.

The sealant composition of the present invention is preferably made by initially compounding the poly(fluoroorganosiloxane-poly(silylarylene)siloxane copolymer, or “block copolymer” into a curable sealant base, or masterbatch under shearing conditions. Shearing can be effected at a temperature in a range between about 25° C. and about 200° C., preferably, in a range between about 100° C. and about 150° C., at atmospheric pressure, and preferably under inert conditions, such as under an inert gas, for example nitrogen, in a mixer, for example, a double-planetary mixer. Shearing can be carried out over a period in a range between about 15 minutes and about 4 hours, preferably in a range between about 1 hour and about 2 hours.

The block copolymer can be blended with a filler which can include a reinforcing filler, such as fumed silica, or a combination thereof with an extending filler, such as diatomaceous earth, precipitated silica, ground quartz, or calcium carbonate. It is preferred to use fumed silica which has been pretreated with an effective amount of a cyclic siloxane, such as octamethylycyclotetrasiloxane, or a mixture thereof with an organosilazane, such as hexamethyldisilazane. A proportion of filler in a range between about 0 parts and about 30 parts by weight, per 100 parts of block copolymer can be used. Preferably, the filler is present in a range between about 5 parts and about 15 parts by weight per 100 parts of block copolymer. A heat stabilizer, such as iron oxide, in a range between about 0.1 and about 10 parts by weight, per 100 parts of block copolymer has been found to be effective.

After blending of the masterbatch ingredients, the mixture can be degassed under reduced pressure, and the resulting paste can be stored. The neutral condensation curable poly(fluoroorganosiloxane-poly(silylarylene)siloxane copolymer sealant compositions can be made by blending the block copolymer masterbatch with an effective amount of a condensation catalyst and a suitable bis(polyalkoxysilyl)organosiloxane cross-linker, referred to hereinafter sometimes as “cross-linker”. “Neutral” as used herein refers to a sealant composition which is substantially acid-free and substantially base-free.

Suitable condensation catalysts are present in a range between about 0.1 and about 2 parts, per 100 parts of block copolymer and include, for example, organo-metal compounds such as dibutyltin diacetate, dimethyltin neodecanato, dibutyltin dilaurate, stannous octoate, dimethyl hydroxoylate, or combinations thereof.

Some of the preferred bis(polyalkoxysilyl)organosiloxane cross-linkers included within formula (1) are, for example, 1,2-bis(tetraethoxysilyl)ethane, 1,6 bis(trimethoxysilyl)hexane, 1,4-bis[trimethoxysilyl(ethyl)]benzene, 1,2-bis(methylidithoxysilyl)ethane, and 1,6-bis(methylidithoxysilyl)hexane. The cross-linkers are present in a range between about 1 and about 20 parts, per 100 parts of block copolymer.

In order that skilled in the art will be better able to practice the present invention, the following examples are given by way of illustration and not by way of limitation. All parts are by weight unless otherwise indicated.

**EXAMPLE 1**

A poly(fluoroorganosiloxane-siloxane-poly(silylarylene)siloxane block copolymer useful in making a condensation curable sealant composition was prepared as follows:

A mixture of 2.26 grams (g) (0.010 mole) of 1,4-bis(dimethylhydroxysilyl)benzene and 9.42 g (0.020 mole) of tris[(trifluoropropyl)methyl]cyclosiloxane was heated with stirring to about 150° C. under a nitrogen atmosphere. There was then added 0.04 g of sodium fluorosilicate. After 60 minutes at 150° C., there was added to the mixture 0.065 g of a silyl phosphate. The reaction mixture was maintained with stirring for an additional at 150° C. and then allowed to cool. Based on method of preparation, there was obtained a block copolymer, including chemically combined blocks of 1,4-dimethyl-silylphenylsiloxane units and blocks of methyl(3,3,3-trifluoropropyl)siloxane units. A silicon-29 nuclear magnetic resonance spectrum indicated the 1,4-phenylenedimethylsiloxane:methyl(3,3,3-trifluoropropyl)disiloxane ratio to be 1:5.7 as compared to the theoretical of 1:6. Based on gel permeation chromatography (GPC), its weight average molecular weight was 151,297; number average molecular weight=90,292; differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) indicated a Tg of –63° C., measured at a rate of 10° C. per minute.
EXAMPLE 2

A viscous red sealant paste useful in making condensation curable sealant compositions was prepared as follows from a block copolymer made in accordance with the method of Example 1. The block copolymer was initially compounded in a Baker-Perkins double-planetary mixer for 1 hour under a nitrogen blanket with a silazane/octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane treated fumed silica, and red iron oxide. A homogeneous filler dispersion was prepared based on the use of 1324 parts of block copolymer, 105 parts BTMSEB, or "BTMSEB". The copolymer was then discharged while slightly above room temperature into a 4 liter (L) Semco 1350 apparatus of PRC. The respective catalyzed formulations at ambient temperatures were defined in the tables below by the particular bis While typical embodiments have been set forth for the invention, particularly the crosslinkers can be used for preparation of fuel tank sealants.

Several neutral condensation curable sealant compositions were prepared by blending in a Semco 388 mixer, 4 inches x 5 inches x 0.08 inches sheets. The sheets were allowed to cure to the elastomeric state for a minimum of 7 days at 25°C and 50% relative humidity (RH).

Tensile properties, such as tensile strength (psi), elongation (%), and 100% modulus (psi) of each of the respective compression molded elastomeric sheets were then measured. 45

The above results show that the copolymers of the present invention are depolymerization resistant and provide neutral condensation cureable compositions which are useful as solvent resistant sealants.

7 Day Test Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Tensile Strength (psi)</th>
<th>Elongation (%)</th>
<th>100% Modulus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BTMSEB</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTSE</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTMSEB</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTMSEB</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTSE</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTMSEB</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTMSHEX</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTMSEB</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The crosslinker in the present invention can be employed in non-corrosive cure systems to fabricate elastomers useful as fuel resistant sealing materials, electronic encapsulation, and in applications requiring chemically resistant materials. Particularly, the crosslinkers can be used for preparation of fuel tank sealants.

While typical embodiments have been set forth for the purpose of illustration, the foregoing description should not be deemed to be a limitation on the scope of the invention. Accordingly, various modifications, adaptations, and alternatives may occur to one skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.
present in a range between about 1 mole and about 2 moles, per mole of bis(diorganohydroxysilyl)arylene.
7. The sealant composition in accordance with claim 4, wherein the bis(diorganohydroxysilyl)arylene comprises the formula
\[(\text{HO})-(\text{R})_z\text{Si}]_z\]
wherein \(Q\) is a \(C_{6-12}\) divalent aromatic organic radical, and \(R\) is a \(C_{1-4}\) alkyl radical.
8. The sealant composition in accordance with claim 7, wherein the bis(diorganohydroxysilyl)arylene comprises 1,4-bis(dimethylhydroxysilyl)benzene.
9. The sealant composition in accordance with claim 4, wherein the poly(fluoroalkylorgano)cyclopolsiloxane comprises the formula
\[(\text{RO})_z\text{MSilzQ},\]
where \(Q\) is a \(C_{2-12}\) divalent organic radical, \(R\) is a \(C_{1-4}\) alkyl radical, and \(X\) is a member selected from the group consisting of \(R\) and \(RO\).
10. A neutral condensation curable poly(fluoroorgano)siloxy-poly(silarylene)siloxane block copolymer sealant composition comprising
(a) a poly(fluoroorgano)siloxane-poly(silarylene)siloxane block copolymer,
(b) a cross-linker,
(c) a condensation catalyst, and
(d) a heat stabilizer,
wherein the heat stabilizer is present in a range between about 0.1 and about 10 parts by weight per 100 parts of the copolymer.
11. A neutral condensation curable poly(fluoroorgano)siloxy-poly(silarylene)siloxane block copolymer sealant composition comprising
(a) a poly(fluoroorgano)siloxane-poly(silarylene)siloxane block copolymer,
(b) a cross-linker, and
(c) a condensation catalyst,
wherein the cross-linker comprises the formula
\[(\text{RO})_z\text{Si}]_z\cdot\text{Q}.
where \(Q\) is a \(C_{2-12}\) divalent organic radical, \(R\) is a \(C_{1-4}\) alkyl radical, and \(X\) is a member selected from the group consisting of \(R\) and \(RO\).
12. A neutral condensation curable poly(fluoroorgano)siloxy-poly(silarylene)siloxane block copolymer sealant composition comprising
(a) a poly(fluoroorgano)siloxane-poly(silarylene)siloxane block copolymer,
(b) a cross-linker,
(c) a condensation catalyst, and
(d) a heat stabilizer,
wherein the heat stabilizer is present in a range between about 0.1 and about 10 parts by weight per 100 parts of the copolymer.
13. A neutral condensation curable poly(fluoroorgano)siloxy-poly(silarylene)siloxane block copolymer sealant composition comprising
(a) a poly(fluoroorgano)siloxane-poly(silarylene)siloxane block copolymer,
(b) a cross-linker,
(c) a condensation catalyst, and
(d) a heat stabilizer,
wherein the heat stabilizer comprises iron oxide.

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