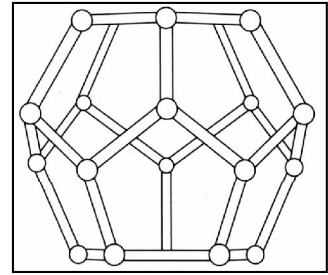

Zotefoams plc

Technical Information Sheet – TIS 03 (previously BT117) Quality



INTRODUCTION

The products and services provided by Zotefoams plc/Zotefoams Inc (Zotefoams) for many years have established a reputation for quality with our customers, and this is a valued company asset which we continually strive to enhance and improve. This Bulletin sets out briefly the Zotefoams approach to quality and customer satisfaction.

QUALITY STANDARDS

In June 1990 Zotefoams plc gained certification for its quality systems from the British Standards institution (BSI) to the standard ISO 9002/ BS 5750 : Pt 2/ EN 29002 (Certificate number FM01870), and was the first manufacturer of polyolefin foams to be accredited to this standard. Regular audits have been undertaken by BSI since 1990 to the present day on a 6 monthly cycle. Over the years there has been continual improvement to the quality systems to meet the changing needs of both the company and the standard.



Zotefoams plc is now certified to the international standard '[BS EN] ISO 9001: 2000 Quality Management Systems – Requirements' (Certificate number FM01870) by BSI.

BS EN ISO 9001:2000
Certificate No. FM01870

In the USA, Zotefoams Inc, the company's plant at Walton, Kentucky, gained certification for its quality systems from Perry Johnson Registrars Inc. to the international standard ISO 9001 : 2000 (Certificate number C2003-01786) in July 2003 and continues to the present day. Regular audits are undertaken by Perry Johnson Registrars Inc. on a 6 monthly cycle.

TRACEABILITY

Zotefoams uses a computer software based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) package for end to end control of all its business processes, from specification through purchasing, raw materials, manufacture, testing, sales, shipping and invoicing. Every batch of material manufactured is allocated by the ERP system a unique Lot number which is detailed on all shipping Delivery Notes and product packaging/pallet labels.



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This Lot number provides traceability via the ERP system from finished goods back to raw materials through every stage of the manufacturing process.

Zotefoams does not provide traceability for each individual sheet once a sheet removed from the packaging/pallet and its labels. That responsibility rests with the customer and traceability within the customers' quality systems. All Zotefoams markings on individual foam sheets are for internal use during the manufacturing processes and have no direct relevance to the identity and Lot number of the foam batch.

SPECIFICATIONS AND TEST CERTIFICATES

Zotefoams publishes Product Specification TIS 01 (Zotefoams plc)/ TIS 01A (Zotefoams Inc.); most customers find that these specifications meet their requirements and Zotefoams assures all products to the Product Specification in the form of a 'Letter of Guarantee' statement at the foot of every Delivery Note page.

Technical data sheets are published listing a range of property values relating to Zotefoams Azote brand foam products. The data sheet property values are typical of the material and are intended to provide guidance to customers; they do **not constitute a specification** and should not be used for specification development. The data sheet property values however, in combination with details given in TIS 01/TIS 01A do give the expected range of product properties.

Some customers have special needs requiring a unique specification to be agreed and batch release testing to be carried out on every manufactured Product Lot to provide certificated release; such certificates are known as a Manufacturer's Test Report (MTR). MTR's are Product Lot specific and uniquely numbered, being controlled and generated by the ERP system. It is absolutely essential that the requirement, including the release testing criteria, for a MTR is established with the Zotefoams Quality Assurance Department BEFORE an order is placed with Zotefoams for the product. MTR's cannot be issued retrospectively for specific Lots after the product has been delivered.

Normally the Quality Assurance Department will post MTR's to the customer within 24 hours of the goods being despatched from the manufacturing site. MTR's cannot be supplied with the actual goods, however, with prior agreement, those customers for whom it is essential to have the certification available at the time of delivery of the goods can have MTR's sent electronically or faxed with the original document following up in the post.

TOTAL QUALITY AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

The quality management system and processes required to comply with ISO9001 are directed towards continual improvement, customer satisfaction and product and service quality. However, such processes only relate to a part of the total operation of any business and do not necessarily ensure that Quality is an integral part of the company culture.

For this reason the concept of 'Total Quality and Continual Improvement', in which every employee and every part of the organisation is clear about its requirements from its 'suppliers' and the needs of its 'customers' has been a part of Zotefoams' operations for many years. Departments involve every employee in regular 'Department Briefings', to ensure that each group is aware of and responding to the requirements of both internal and external customers. This concept is also taken to the wider Company level in the form regular 'Business Briefings' given by members of the Executive Management Team to all employees.

Quality Improvement Teams, involving employees from all relevant parts of the business, work on continual improvement programmes, recognising that to stand still is to fall behind. Such programmes involve not only improvements to product and service quality but also manufacturing improvements for tighter quality control, less waste and greater efficiency, together with product development improvements, ensuring new products are launched on time and meet agreed market needs.

Statistical techniques are powerful tools to ensure that any process is routinely capable of meeting its intended purpose. Such techniques have for some time been used by Zotefoams to analyse process variation, but are now used throughout the business in such areas as product properties trend analysis, delivery to promise performance, setting specifications, cost of quality, nonconformance analysis, sales analysis, raw materials costs, manufacturing costs, stockturn, debtor performance and many more.

CUSTOMERS AND SUPPLIERS

Zotefoams recognises that it is essential to maintain interactions with both customers and suppliers to ensure on the one hand that customer requirements are clearly understood and satisfied, and on the other that incoming materials continue to meet Zotefoams' demanding production and service specifications. Regular meetings with both customers and suppliers aim to maintain such interaction at a strong and healthy level.

SUMMARY

In respect of both products and services, Zotefoams is widely recognised as a provider of quality. The company has achieved registration at both its manufacturing sites to the international quality management systems standard ISO 9001 : 2000, and has operated to the equivalent forerunners since 1990.

The concept of Total Quality was introduced some years ago with statistical techniques now adopted throughout the organisation. Quality Improvement teams target continual improvement in all areas including product quality and service, manufacturing efficiency and product development. The business has adapted rapidly to change and aims to maintain and strengthen its reputation for quality through the 21st century.

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