

WHY IS AN AUTHORIZED SUPPLIER IMPORTANT?

Do not purchase your abrasive products at flea markets, yard sales, Internet auction sites or any other non-authorized supplier.

We have received quality complaints, product breakages and personal injuries involving old abrasive products purchased at flea markets, yard sales, Internet auction sites and other non-authorized suppliers. It is amazing that someone will purchase a 40 or 50 year old item and then complain that it did not perform as expected. Many of our products are organic and do degrade with time. Even if it is a non-organic product, do you know how it was stored? Do you know if someone damaged the product since it was manufactured and originally shipped? If you purchased a 1970 automobile or can of vegetables, would you return it to the manufacturer with a complaint because the product did not perform as new? You would not think a reasonable person would make such a complaint, yet we do receive them. We in the Product Safety Department have received requests for Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for items manufactured BEFORE the United States "Right to Know" Law (1985) went into effect. Saint-Gobain Abrasive's Product Safety Department has the following recommendations for bonded abrasive wheels.

It has always been Saint-Gobain Abrasive's recommendation that Resinoid Bonded grinding wheels be used up within 2 years from the date of manufacture. This recommendation assumes that Resinoid Bonded grinding wheels have been stored under ideal storage conditions. It may be true under ideal storage conditions Resinoid Bonded grinding wheels can survive without any degradation in strength for well over two years; however, it is always wise to suspect any wheels over two years old and have them re-inspected and/or re-speed tested to determine if there has been any degradation in strength. If the wheels are stored under less than ideal conditions, they may have a much shorter shelf life depending upon the severity of storage conditions.

These same comments also apply to rubber and shellac bonded grinding wheels. As for vitrified or glass bonded grinding wheels, the shelf life is less influenced by humidity and adverse storage conditions as compared to resinoid, rubber or shellac, but even vitrified grinding wheels do not have an infinite shelf life. The best procedure and the best rule of thumb is to have any wheel that is two years old or older re-speed tested and re-inspected to ensure it is fit for use. The procedure for having this done and the charges are better explained by our Customer Service Department, but the cost of shipping as well as the cost of re-inspection is the customer's responsibility. Also, any wheels rejected or otherwise lost in the re-inspection process will also be the responsibility of the customer.

Keep in mind, however, that this procedure is good to verify the reliability of a product but must not be performed until you are ready to consume the wheel. If wheels are sent back after the two year time frame for re-inspection and re-testing and then put back on the shelf, there is no telling how long they will be fit for use after that last inspection. Therefore, these wheels must be consumed as soon as practical.

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In addition to our shelf life recommendations, we post a return policy (in our Authorized Distributor's price book) that states:

Policy

Saint-Gobain Abrasives' policy is designed to encourage distributors to review and return inactive inventory. Return of stock products for reason other than an error by Saint-Gobain Abrasives will be considered under the following conditions:

- Items must have been standard stock at time of purchase.
- Items cannot be more than one year old from invoice date.
- Items being returned must be in original, unaltered package and received in good, salable condition.
- Freight must be prepaid.
- A Returned Goods Authorization (RGA#) must be obtained prior to return of material.
- When an RGA# is requested within 30 days of the invoice date and the material returned within 30 days of the RGA issuance date, credit will be issued at the full invoice value provided the material is returned in the original, unopened Standard Package.
- For material returned after 30 days of the invoice date and meeting the above conditions, credit will be issued at the invoice value less a 10% restocking charge. This restocking charge will be waived if the return is accompanied by an order for other stock products of equal or greater value priced at current published price levels.

The important message for the reader to take from this article is that no matter how inexpensive the abrasive product is through these non-standard channels, you often get what you pay for! A customer who purchased coated abrasive products over 30 years old from an internet site told me that he could not believe that he could purchase a box of belts so cheap (one dollar for a whole box) until he attempted to put the belts onto a grinder and they broke apart in his hands. For your safety and the safety of others, purchase your abrasive product only through authorized marketing channels. Always carefully inspect all abrasive products before using them and know what you are purchasing.

For additional information on this topic or if you need any other abrasive safety information, please review ANSI, OSHA and all literature provided by the abrasive wheel and machine manufacturer. You may also contact the Saint-Gobain Product Safety Department at Tel. (508) 795-2317 or Fax. (508) 795-5120 or contact your Saint-Gobain Abrasives, Inc. representative with any safety related questions.

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