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## Plastic Film Applications

Plastics are one of the most versatile and valuable family of materials ever developed. Individual molecular building blocks, called monomers, are bonded together into long polymer chains. The combination of different types of monomers produces plastic resins with distinct properties and characteristics. Some of these resins can be extruded in thin, flexible sheets or rolls of plastic film.

Lightweight and compact, but strong. Versatile and flexible, but affordable. Every day, there are new uses being developed for plastic film in both the packaging and non-packaging fields. Plastic films represent a very efficient use of natural resources and offer a number of other significant benefits:

- Plastic food wrappings prevent spoilage and reduce food waste.
- Plastic vapour and air barriers in home construction prevent moisture damage and support energy-conservation efforts.
- Plastic shrink and stretch wrap slash packaging weight and bulk. They also help reduce transportation and storage costs.
- Agricultural films are being used to reduce weeds, keep seedlings moist, wrap silage and otherwise increase yields.

From the time they are produced, through their use and reuse, and to their final recycling, recovery or disposal, plastic films provide significant environmental benefits.

Most plastic films are just 2 mil to 6 mil thick (that's two to six-thousandths of an inch). They are made of a wide variety of resins, or combinations of resins that can be blended or co-extruded in up to ten-layers, each with its own particular features, to create the perfect polymer product for the job. Versatile plastic film can be coloured or clear, printed or plain, or laminated to aluminum, paper and other materials.

The market applications for plastic film can be divided into three major categories: food packaging, non-food packaging, and other plastic products.

- Food packaging made from plastic film includes in-store bags for produce, bags for bread and rolls, and bulk foods, bag-in-a-box, candy wrap and bags, carton liners for cereal and cake mixes, wrappers for fresh and prepared red meat, poultry and fish, and milk bags. Then when you've finished your shopping, you pack it all into plastic grocery bags.
- Non-food packaging comprises a tremendous array of film products, including: industrial liners for everything from tote boxes of nuts and bolts to large drums of industrial chemicals, as well as bubble packaging, mailing envelopes, shipping sacs, diaper overwrap, dry cleaning bags, stretch wrap and so on.

- The number of non-packaging applications for plastic films is growing daily, and includes: leaf and yard waste bags, trash bags, and can liners; agricultural films (such as greenhouse, fumigation or mulch films, hay and silage wrappings, etc.); construction materials (including vapour and air barriers, moisture barriers under concrete, tarps and drop cloths, etc.); medical applications (IV bags, sterile wraps, biomedical waste bags, etc.); and other consumer products, such as household plastic wrap, diaper liners, and so on.