



## STAINLESS STEEL INFORMATION

*Stainless steel is the name given to a wide range of steels which have the characteristics of greatly enhanced corrosion resistance over conventional mild and alloy steels. Stainless steel is used across a wide spectrum of engineering applications and this has led to the development of the vast range of different types of stainless steel that are available.*

## Stainless steel information

Stainless Steel is the name given to a wide range of steels which have the characteristics of greatly enhanced corrosion resistance over conventional mild and alloy steels.

The enhanced corrosion resistance of stainless steel essentially comes from the addition of at least 11% chromium, however most stainless steels commonly contain around 18% chromium. Other significant alloying elements include nickel and for superior corrosion resistant properties, molybdenum.

For ACO Marine applications, the principal properties of stainless steel may be summarised as follows:

- Durable and corrosion resistant in highly aggressive environments.
- Hygienic, easily cleaned surfaces.
- Fire resistance.
- Low weight.
- Non-magnetic.
- Aesthetically attractive surface finish.
- Good forming and fabrication characteristics.
- Excellent strength and resistance to oxidation at high temperatures.

All of which make stainless steel an obvious first choice material for demanding applications.

### Stainless steel families

Stainless Steel is used across a wide spectrum of engineering applications and this has led to the development of the vast range of different types of stainless steel that are now available. There are four main grades of stainless steel:

#### Austenitic stainless steel

This group of stainless steels is the most widely used and encompasses the generic 304 and 316 grades of material. These materials are used in the ACO manufacturing process and are ideal for applications including food processing, dairy, brewing, water, pharmaceutical, chemical and petrochemical industries.

304 grade stainless steels contain around 18% chromium and 10% nickel and provide excellent corrosion resistance. For applications where superior corrosion resistance properties are required under extreme conditions particularly where chlorides are involved, 316 grade stainless steels are used and contain around 17% chromium, 12% nickel and 2.2% molybdenum.

Unlike all other grades of stainless steels, austenitic grades are non-magnetic and as a consequence magnetic particles are not attracted to the system surfaces which otherwise would encourage contamination and galvanic corrosion.

#### Ferritic stainless steels

Ferritic stainless steels have inferior corrosion resistance properties compared to austenitic 304 and 316 grades and are used in less demanding applications such as domestic appliance and motor car trim. This grade of stainless steel is slightly more brittle when compared to austenitic grades.

Ferritic steels contain between 11.5% and 16.5% chromium and less than 0.5% nickel. This group of steels are magnetic and will attract particulates which can cause contamination and corrosion problems. Ferritic steels are not suitable for drainage products.

#### Martensitic stainless steels

Martensitic steels are magnetic and have the highest strength of the groups of stainless steels, however they also have the poorest corrosion resistance. They can be hardened by heat treatment and generally find their main application in cutlery manufacture.

Martensitic steels contain around 12.5% chromium and contain a relatively high carbon content of 0.3% (austenitic and ferritic steels contain around 0.02% and 0.04% carbon respectively).

Martensitic steels' poor corrosion resistance makes them unsuitable for drainage applications.

#### Duplex stainless steels

Duplex stainless steels have an effective austenitic/ferritic structure and are characterised by good corrosion resistance, high strength and in particular, good resistance to stress corrosion cracking.

Duplex steels contain around 22% chromium, 5.5% nickel, 3% molybdenum and 0.02% carbon. This group of steels is magnetic and will attract particulates which can cause contamination and galvanic corrosion problems and therefore are unsuitable for drainage applications.

### Corrosion resistance

The single most important property of stainless steels and the reason for their existence and widespread use, is their natural corrosion resistance. In spite of their name, stainless steels can both 'stain' and corrode if used incorrectly.

The reason for the good corrosion properties is due to the formation of a very thin, invisible oxide film that forms on the surface of the material in oxidising environments such as the atmosphere and water.

This film is a chromium-rich oxide that protects the steel from attack in aggressive environments. As chromium is added to steel, a rapid reduction in the corrosion rate is observed because of this protective film. In order to obtain a compact and continuous passive film, chromium content of at least 11% is required. Passivity increases fairly rapidly with increasing chromium content up to about 17% chromium.

The most important alloying element is therefore chromium, but a number of other elements including nickel, molybdenum and nitrogen also contribute to the corrosion resistance properties of stainless steels. Other alloying elements may also be added to enhance the corrosion resistance in particular environments.

Stainless steels must oxidise in order to form the passive, chromium-rich oxide film. Stainless steels have a very strong tendency to passivate and only a small amount of oxidising agents are needed for passivation – air and water are sufficient to passivate stainless steels and indeed, this oxide film is spontaneously regenerated when exposed to oxygen. An important factor to note is that the passive film is self healing, so when the material is cut or machined or, should chemical or mechanical damage occur, the passive film will 'heal' or re-passivate in oxidising environments spontaneously – unlike a painted finish on mild steel.

Selection of the correct grade of material for each application is an important factor in the design process. It is important to note that even 316 grades of stainless steel are not immune to all kinds of chemical attack; use with reducing solutions, such as hydrochloric and sulphuric acids particularly when in concentrated and/or hot form, requires careful consideration. See material resistance chart on following pages.

### Finishing processes

A stainless steel finish should appear clean, smooth and faultless. This is obvious when the steel is used for such purposes demanding stringent hygiene or decorative trim applications, but a fine surface finish is also crucial in respect to its corrosion resistant properties.

The corrosion resistance properties of stainless steel are achieved by the spontaneous formation of a very thin chromium-rich oxide layer over the surface of the material. Unfortunately, surface defects and imperfections introduced during the manufacturing process may drastically disturb the self healing process of the passive layer and subsequently reduce the corrosion resistance of the material. In the case of the ACO manufacturing process, it is the welding process that creates the greatest challenge to corrosion resistance.

After welding stainless steel, a bluish high temperature oxide film can be seen which has substantially inferior corrosion protec-

tion properties compared to the original passive layer. Immediately beneath this blue oxide film is a thin layer of chromium depleted metal that makes the metal surface susceptible to corrosion.

Post weld treatment is, therefore, very important to restore the corrosion protection properties and is effectively achieved by removing the blue high temperature oxide film and chromium depleted layer to restore the surface of the material. This 'cleaning' is essentially a controlled corrosion process using chemicals. This will restore not only its original corrosion resistance performance but also the high quality aesthetics.

The chemical processing methods used in the ACO Marine process are summarised as follows:

#### Pickle passivation

The standard ACO Marine manufacturing process uses the pickle passivation chemical finishing process to restore the products to their full optimum corrosion resistant state without damaging the surface finish. This is considered the best method for cleaning welded joints.

Pickle passivation is a two-phase process. Pickling removes both the bluish high temperature oxide film and the chromium depleted layer and is achieved by placing the components in a pickling bath containing a mixture of nitric acid and hydrofluoric acid.

The second phase is passivation and in many ways is similar to the pickling process. For this process the components are placed in a bath containing nitric acid only. This treatment strengthens the passive layer and also removes any iron impurities, which may have become embedded in the surface of the stainless steel during the manufacturing process.

This treatment is important where mechanical cleaning of the components has taken place with the use of wire brushes, grinding wheels and files where iron particles from other materials may contaminate the stainless steel surface.

#### Electropolishing

Electropolishing is ideal for producing a uniform, highly reflective lustre with an extremely smooth finish even on the most complex product contours. It is a well proven method of polishing and is achieved by an electro-chemical process that is essentially the reverse of electroplating.

The components are immersed in a bath of electrolyte containing phosphoric acid where the components become the anode of a direct current electrical circuit. The process is characterised by the selective attack on the surface of the components whereby upstanding roughnesses are preferentially dissolved and will yield a progressively smoother, brighter surface.

For pharmaceutical and food processing industries, the electropolishing process considerably improves bacterial resistance.

Electropolished ACO Pipe and other stainless steel products are available from ACO to special order.

STAINLESS STEEL CHANNELS

INDUSTRIAL GULLIES

SHOWER CHANNELS

SANITARY RANGE

PLASTIC FLOOR GULLIES

BALCONY AND TERRACE DRAINS

STAINLESS STEEL PIPES

ACCESS COVERS

BACK FLOW PREVENTERS

GREASE SEPARATORS FREE STANDING/GROUND INSTAL.

BIOLOGICAL GREASE TRAPS

STAINLESS STEEL INFORMATION

## Stainless Steel Information

The resistance information contained within this table is indicative only. All data is based on reactions noted at an ambient temperature of 20°C. Higher temperatures will generally reduce the corrosion resistance of the materials.

Please contact ACO if guarantees are required of specific material suitability. We shall arrange for tests to be undertaken with the reagent to establish the chemical resistance of the materials.

### Legend

- ✓ - Recommended
- ? - Suitable. However, contact ACO for further advice.
- ✘ - Not recommended
- ~ - No data available

Reagent	Stainless Steel	Stainless Steel	EPDM	Viton
	304	316		
Acetic Acid 20 %	✓	✓	✓	✓
Acetic Acid 80%	✘	✓	✓	✓
Acetone	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alcohol (Methyl or Ethyl)	✓	✓	✓	?
Aluminium Chloride	?	?	✓	✓
Aluminium Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ammonia Gas (Dry)	✓	✓	~	~
Ammonium Chloride	?	?	✓	✓
Ammonium Hydroxide	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ammonium Nitrate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ammonium Phosphate	?	✘	✓	✓
Ammonium Sulphate	?	✓	✓	✓
Ammonium Sulphide	✓	✓	~	~
Amyl Chloride	✓	✓	✘	?
Aniline	✓	✓	?	✓
Barium Chloride	✓	✓	✓	✓
Barium Hydroxide 10%	~	~	✓	✓
Barium Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Barium Sulphide	~	~	✓	✓
Beer	✓	✓	✓	✓
Beet Sugar Liquors	✓	✓	✓	✓
Benzene	✓	✓	✘	✓
Benzoic Acid	✓	✓	✘	✓
Bleach-12,5%Active C1	~	~	✓	✘
Boric Acid	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bromic Acid	?	?	~	~
Bromine Water	✘	✘	~	~
Butane	✓	✓	✘	✓
Calcium Carbonate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Calcium Chloride	✘	?	✓	✓
Calcium Hydroxide	?	✓	✓	✓
Calcium Hypochlorite	✘	?	?	✓
Calcium Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cane Sugar Liquors	~	~	✓	✓
Carbonic Acid	✓	✓	✓	✓
Carbon Bisulphide	✓	✓	✘	✓
Carbon Dioxide	✓	✓	✓	✓
Carbon Monoxide	✓	✓	✓	✓
Carbon Tetrachloride	✓	✓	✘	✓
Caustic Potash	✓	✓	✓	✓

Reagent	Stainless Steel	Stainless Steel	EPDM	Viton
	304	316		
Caustic Soda 20%	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caustic Soda 50%	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caustic Soda 80%	✘	✓	?	?
Chlorine (Dry)	?	?	✓	✓
Chlorine (Wet)	✘	✘	✘	✓
Chloroacetic Acid	?	?	?	✘
Chlorobenzene	✓	✓	✘	✓
Chloroform	?	?	✘	✓
Chromic Acid 50%	✘	✘	?	✓
Chromic Acid 10%	✓	✓	✘	?
Citric Acid	?	✓	✓	✓
Copper Chloride	✘	✘	✓	✓
Copper Cyanide	✓	✓	✓	✓
Copper Nitrate	✓	✓	~	✓
Copper Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cottonseed Oil	✓	✓	✘	✓
Cresol	✓	✓	✘	✓
Cyclohexanone	✓	✓	?	✓
Cyclohexane	✓	✓	✘	✓
Cyclohexanone	✓	✓	?	✘
Diethylamine	✓	✓	?	✓
Dimethylaniline	✓	✓	?	✘
Disodium Phosphate	~	~	✓	✓
Distilled Water	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethyl Acetate	✓	✓	?	✘
Ethylene Chloride	✓	✓	✘	?
Ethylene Glycol	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fatty acids(Cb)	✓	✓	✘	✓
Ferric Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fluorene Gas(Wet)	✘	✘	✓	?
Formaldehyde 37%	✓	✓	✓	✓
Formic Acid 90%	✘	✓	✓	?
Freon 12	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fruit Juices & Pulp	?	✓	~	✓
Furfural	✓	✓	✘	✘
Gasoline(Refined)	✓	✓	✘	✓
Glucose	✓	✓	✓	✓
Glycerine	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hydrobromic Acid 20%	✘	✘	✓	✓
Hydrochloric Acid 40%	✘	✘	✘	✓

Reagent	Stainless Steel	Stainless Steel	EPDM	Viton
	304	316		
Hydrocyanic Acid	✓	✓	?	✓
Hydrogen Peroxide 90%	✓	✓	✗	✓
Hydroquinone	✓	✓	✗	✓
Hypochlorous Acid (Chlorine Water)	✗	✗	✗	✓
Iodine	✗	✗	?	✓
Kerosene	✓	✓	✗	✓
Lactic Acid 25%	✓	✓	✓	✓
Linseed Oil	✓	✓	✗	✓
Magnesium Chloride	✗	✗	✓	✓
Magnesium Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maleic Acid	✓	✓	✗	✓
Methyl Chloride	✓	✓	✗	✗
Methyl Ethyl Ketone	✓	✓	✓	✗
Milk	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minerals Oils	~	~	✗	✓
Nickel Chloride	✗	✗	✓	✓
Nickel Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oils and Fats	✓	✓	?	✓
Oleic Acid	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oxalic Acid	✓	✓	✓	✓
Palmitic Acid 10%	✓	✓	✓	✓
Perchloric Acid 10%	✗	✗	?	✓
Perchloric Acid 70%	✗	✗	?	✓
Petroleum Oils	✓	✓	✗	✓
Phenol 5%	✓	✓	?	✓
Phosphorous Trichloride	✓	✓	✓	✓
Photographic Solutions	✗	✗	✓	✓
Picric Acid	✓	✓	✓	✓
Plating Solutions	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potassium Carbonate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potassium Chloride	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potassium Cyanide	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potassium Dichromate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potassium Hydroxide	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potassium Permanganate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potassium Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Propane Gas	✓	✓	~	✓
Propyl Alcohol	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sea Water (Natural)	✗	?	✓	✓

Reagent	Stainless Steel	Stainless Steel	EPDM	Viton
	304	316		
Silver Nitrate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Silver Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Silver Bicarbonate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sodium Bisulphite	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sodium Carbonate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sodium Cyanide	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sodium Ferrocyanide	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sodium Hydroxide	?	✓	✓	✓
Sodium Hypochlorite	?	✓	?	✓
Sodium Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sodium Sulphide	?	✗	✓	✓
Sodium Sulphite	?	✓	✓	✓
Sodium Thiosulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stannous Chloride	✗	✓	✗	✓
Stearic Acid	✓	✓	?	✓
Sulphurous Acid	?	✓	?	?
Sulphur Dioxide(Dry)	✗	✓	✓	✓
Sulphur Dioxide(Wet)	~	✓	✓	✓
Sulphuric Acid 50%	✗	✗	?	✓
Sulphuric Acid 70%	✗	✗	?	✓
Sulphuric Acid 93%	✗	✗	?	✓
Tannic Acid	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tanning Liquors	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tartaric Acid	✗	?	?	✓
Toluene	✓	✓	✗	✗
Trichloroethylene	✓	✓	✗	✓
Triethylamine	✓	✓	✓	✗
Trisodium Phosphate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Turpentine	✓	✓	✗	✓
Urea	✓	✓	✓	✓
Urine	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vinegar	✓	✓	✓	✓
Water(Fresh)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Water(Mine Acid)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Water(Sat)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Whisky	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wines	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xylene	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zinc Chloride	?	?	✓	✓
Zinc Sulphate	✓	✓	✓	✓

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INDUSTRIAL GULLIES  
SHOWER CHANNELS  
SANITARY RANGE  
PLASTIC FLOOR GULLIES  
BALCONY AND TERRACE DRAINS  
STAINLESS STEEL PIPES  
ACCESS COVERS  
BACK FLOW PREVENTERS  
GREASE SEPARATORS FREE STANDING/GROUND INSTAL.  
BIOLOGICAL GREASE TRAPS



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