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Paper grade classifications

Scope

The purpose of this TIP is to identify several commonly used categories for classifying paper grades and to list specific grades which would normally be included in each category.

Significance

Several TAPPI TIPs and numerous technical publications make reference to general categories of paper and board grades. These grade categories are often either undefined or inconsistently defined. The intent of this TIP is to provide general descriptions which can be used consistently in technical publications, production summaries, and data retrieval systems to combine and categorize paper grade data.

Safety precautions

There are no special safety precautions associated with the information in this TIP.

Background

A particular grade of paper is typically identified in one or more of the following three ways:

- Final use of the paper
- Furnish used in making the paper
- Type of machinery used in making the paper

For example, “off-machine coated groundwood publication paper” indicates the use of the paper (publications), the major furnish component (groundwood), and an indication of the manufacturing process (coated off-machine).

The categories outlined in this TIP for identifying paper grades are based primarily on the use and furnish of the paper. There are 12 such categories.

Selection of the categories is somewhat arbitrary and category definitions are not rigid. These grade categories are, however, commonly used and represent over 95% of all paper tonnage produced. In general, those grades which can be produced on a given paper machine will be found in the same category.

Grade definitions

The 12 major paper grade categories are defined below. Included with each definition is a listing of several specific grades which are included in that category.

There are several grades that could be placed in different categories. For example, No. 4 coated paper may be in either the “coated groundwood” category or in the “coated wood-free paper” category, depending on the furnish.

The table given at the end of this TIP lists over 300 specific grades or end uses. These grades are listed in alphabetical order with an “x” indicating the corresponding major category or categories. This listing of grade(s)

