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## **ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT**

### Grafting poly(vinyl alcohol) onto polybutadiene rubber latex particles by pre-irradiation Bo Tian<sup>a</sup>, Wei Dong<sup>a,b,c</sup>, Yuguang Liu<sup>a,b,\*</sup>

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#### Abstract

Poly(vinyl alcohol) (PVA) was grafted on polybutadiene rubber latex (PBL) particles (PB-g-PVA) by pre-irradiation via emulsion grafting copolymerization. The grafting degree (G%) increased almost linearly with the reaction time and the weight ratio of PVA to the PB latex, while decreased gradually when the irradiation dose is over 30kGy and the reaction temperature is higher than 60°C. The grafting efficiency (GE%) has the same trend of the G% but the weight ratio of PVA to PBL, GE% decreased with increasing of PVA adding to PB latex. FTIR spectroscopy indicated that the PVA was grafted onto the PB particles. The dynamic light scattering measurement showed that the particle size of PB-g-PVA particles was larger than that of the pristine PBL particles, and it increased with increment of G%. Transmission electron microscopy images of the PB-g-PVA latex particles demonstrated that the size of PB-g-PVA particle was enlarged by the layer of grafted PVA surrounding the PBL particles. Thermal behavior exhibited the phase separation in the PB-g-PVA films,  $T_{g1}$  and  $T_{g2}$  related to the PB and PVA respectively, both of which shifted to a higher temperature with increasing of G%, but the  $T_{g2}$  was still lower than that of the virgin PVA. The increment of the surface free energy of PB-g-PVA films was attributed to the incorporation of the polar PVA, which also resulted in improvement of the hydrophilic properties.

Keywords: Polybutadiene rubber latex; Poly(vinyl alcohol); Pre-irradiation; Grafting copolymerization.

#### **1** Introduction

Rubbers, both natural and synthetic rubber, are extensively used as modification agents for improving toughness of the brittle polymer materials besides tire industry. However, natural rubber (NR), polybutadiene (PBR), polyisoprene (PIPR) and styrene-butadiene rubber (SBR) etc. often need modified to enhance interfacial adhesion and to reduce the dispersed domain size in blending with either polar polymer or crystalline polymer like polyamide (Nylon), epoxy resin, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and polypropylene for improvement of the toughness efficiency. Copolymerization has been a unique method for altering rubber molecularly both in solution and in latex forms [Arayapranee et al., 2002a; Wongthep et al., 2013; Sa-Ad Riyajana et al., 2012; Lehrle and Willist, 1997; Siti et al., 2008; Enviegbulam and Aloka, 1992]. The copolymerization in the latex has the merit and

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