Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0141-3910(18)30018-1

DOI: 10.1016/j.polymdegradstab.2018.01.011

Reference: PDST 8436

To appear in: Polymer Degradation and Stability

Received Date: 17 October 2017

Revised Date: 14 December 2017

Accepted Date: 9 January 2018

Please cite this article as: Deveci S, Antony N, Eryigit B, Effect of carbon black distribution on the properties of polyethylene pipes part 1: Degradation of post yield mechanical properties and fracture surface analyses, *Polymer Degradation and Stability* (2018), doi: 10.1016/j.polymdegradstab.2018.01.011.

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Effect of Carbon Black Distribution on the Properties of Polyethylene Pipes

2 Part 1: Degradation of Post Yield Mechanical Properties and Fracture Surface Analyses

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5 Abstract

In this study, we investigated the effect of carbon black distribution on the degradation of 6 7 mechanical properties of high-density polyethylene in the form of plastic pipes used in water distribution networks. Polyethylene pipes with similar carbon black concentrations but different 8 9 carbon black distributions were produced with industrial scale compounding and extrusion 10 equipment. Tensile specimens were directly prepared from extruded pipe samples and elongated to fracture at different strain rates. Carbon black distributions of bulk samples and fracture surfaces 11 12 were investigated using stereo and scanning electron microscopy (SEM). It was found that the 13 carbon black distributions, fracture surfaces and fracture modes were significantly different in these pipes. Although the yield properties were similar, the post-yield properties of samples were 14 significantly different, dramatically decreasing with the increasing inhomogeneity of carbon black 15 16 distribution. Pipes with a certain level of heterogeneity in the carbon black distribution showed 17 ductile and brittle fractures in the same fracture plane, whereas homogenous black and natural polyethylene (without carbon black) showed ductile fractures only. 18

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21 Keywords: polyethylene pipe; carbon black distribution; tensile properties; fracture surface;
22 mechanical degradation

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