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Self-repair of structural and functional composites with intrinsically self-healing

polymer matrices: A review

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Abstract

Self-healing is a smart and promising way to make materials more reliable and longer lasting. In the case

of structural or functional composites based on a polymer matrix, very often mechanical damage in the

polymer matrix or debonding at the matrix-filler interface is responsible for the decrease in intended

properties. This review describes the healing behavior in structural and functional polymer composites

with a so-called intrinsically self-healing polymer as the continuous matrix. A clear similarity in the

healing of structural and functional properties is demonstrated which can ultimately lead to the design of

polymer composites that autonomously restore multiple properties using the same self-healing

mechanism.

Keywords: B. Mechanical properties; B. Electrical properties; B. Thermal properties; Self-healing.

1. Introduction

Over the last decades the amount of studies reporting on polymer composite functionality and mechanical

properties has grown significantly. Polymer composites showing for example thermal and electrical

properties can be found in daily life in communication, lightning and aerospace applications [1, 2].

Although the field of multifunctional polymer composites is increasing rapidly, researchers are far away

from reaching the diversity in functionalities that nature has established in its composites over the past

millions of years. Wood is one of nature's finest examples of a multifunctional fibrous composite material.

This well-known material consists of parallel hollow tubular cells reinforced by spirally wound cellulosic

fibrils embedded in a hemicellulose and lignin matrix. The helix angle of the spiral fibrils is responsible

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