

# Chemistry of **PETROCHEMICAL PROCESSES**

Second Edition

Provides Quick and Easy  
Access to Hundreds of  
Reactions, Processes  
and Products

Sami Matar  
Lewis F. Hatch

This book is dedicated to the memory of Professor Lewis Hatch (1912–1991), a scholar, an educator, and a sincere friend.

# Chemistry of **PETROCHEMICAL PROCESSES**

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**2nd Edition**

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# Contents

<b>Preface to Second Edition</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>Preface to First Edition</b> .....	<b>xiii</b>

## **CHAPTER ONE**

<b>Primary Raw Materials for Petrochemicals</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Introduction	1
Natural Gas	1
Natural Gas Treatment Processes	3
Natural Gas Liquids	8
Properties of Natural Gas	10
Crude Oils	11
Composition of Crude Oils	12
Properties of Crude Oils	19
Crude Oil Classification	21
Coal, Oil Shale, Tar Sand, and Gas Hydrates	22
References	26

## **CHAPTER TWO**

<b>Hydrocarbon Intermediates</b> .....	<b>29</b>
Introduction	29
Paraffinic Hydrocarbons	29
Methane	30
Ethane	30
Propane	31
Butanes	31
Olefinic Hydrocarbons	32
Ethylene	32
Propylene	33
Butylenes	34
Dienes	36
Butadiene	37
Isoprene	37
Aromatic Hydrocarbons	37
Extraction of Aromatics	38
Liquid Petroleum Fractions and Residues	42
Naphtha	43
Kerosine	45
Gas Oil	46
Residual Fuel Oil	47
References	47

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Crude Oil Processing and Production of Hydrocarbon**

#### **Intermediates ..... 49**

Introduction 49

Physical Separation Processes 49

Atmospheric Distillation 50, Vacuum Distillation 51, Absorption  
Process 52, Adsorption Process 52, Solvent Extraction 53

Conversion Processes 54

Thermal Conversion Processes 55, Catalytic Conversion  
Processes 60

Production of Olefins 91

Steam Cracking of Hydrocarbons 91, Production of Diolefins 101

References 107

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Nonhydrocarbon Intermediates ..... 111**

Introduction 111

Hydrogen 111

Sulfur 114

Uses of Sulfur 116, The Claus Process 116, Sulfuric Acid 117

Carbon Black 118

The Channel Process 119, The Furnace Black Process 119, The  
Thermal Process 119, Properties and Uses of Carbon Black 120

Synthesis Gas 121

Uses of Synthesis Gas 123

Naphthenic Acids 130

Uses of Naphthenic Acid and Its Salts 130

Cresylic Acid 131

Uses of Cresylic Acid 133

References 133

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Chemicals Based on Methane ..... 135**

Introduction 135

Chemicals Based on Direct Reactions of Methane 136

Carbon Disulfide 136, Hydrogen Cyanide 137, Chloromethanes 138

Chemicals Based on Synthesis Gas 143  
Ammonia 144, Methyl Alcohol 149, Oxo Aldehydes and  
Alcohols 163, Ethylene Glycol 166

References 167

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Ethane and Higher Paraffins-Based Chemicals . . . . . 169**

Introduction 169

Ethane Chemicals 169

Propane Chemicals 171

Oxidation of Propane 171, Chlorination of Propane, 172,  
Dehydrogenation of Propane 172, Nitration of Propane 173

n-Butane Chemicals 174

Oxidation of n-Butane 175, Aromatics Production 177,  
Isomerization of n-Butane 180

Isobutane Chemicals 180

Naphtha-Based Chemicals 181

Chemicals from High Molecular Weight n-Paraffins 182

Oxidation of Paraffins 183, Chlorination of n-Paraffins 184,  
Sulfonation of n-Paraffins 185, Fermentation Using n-Paraffins 185

References 186

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **Chemicals Based on Ethylene . . . . . 188**

Introduction 188

Oxidation of Ethylene 189

Derivatives of Ethylene Oxide 192, Acetaldehyde 198, Oxidative  
Carbonylation of Ethylene 201

Chlorination of Ethylene 201

Vinyl Chloride 202, Perchloro- and Trichloroethylene 203

Hydration of Ethylene 204

Oligomerization of Ethylene 205

Alpha Olefins Production 206, Linear Alcohols 207, Butene-1 209

Alkylation Using Ethylene 210

References 211

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **Chemicals Based on Propylene ..... 213**

Introduction 213

Oxidation of Propylene 214

Acrolein 215, Mechanism of Propene Oxidation 215, Acrylic

Acid 217, Ammoxidation of Propylene 218, Propylene Oxide 221

Oxyacylation of Propylene 226

Chlorination of Propylene 226

Hydration of Propylene 227

Properties and Uses of Isopropanol 228

Addition of Organic Acids to Propene 232

Hydroformylation of Propylene: The Oxo Reaction 232

Disproportionation of Propylene (Metathesis) 234

Alkylation Using Propylene 235

References 236

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **C<sub>4</sub> Olefins and Diolefins-Based Chemicals ..... 238**

Introduction 238

Chemicals from n-Butenes 238

Oxidation of Butenes 239, Oligomerization of Butenes 248

Chemicals from Isobutylene 249

Oxidation of Isobutylene 250, Epoxidation of Isobutylene 251,

Addition of Alcohols to Isobutylene 252, Hydration of

Isobutylene 253, Carbonylation of Isobutylene 255, Dimerization  
of Isobutylene 255

Chemicals from Butadiene 255

Adiponitrile 256, Hexamethylenediamine 257, Adipic Acid 257,

Butanediol 258, Chloroprene 258, Cyclic Oligomers of  
Butadiene 259

References 260

## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **Chemicals Based on Benzene, Toluene, and Xylenes ..... 262**

Introduction 262

Reactions and Chemicals of Benzene 262

Alkylation of Benzene 263, Chlorination of Benzene 276, Nitration of Benzene 278, Oxidation of Benzene 280, Hydrogenation of Benzene 281	
Reactions and Chemicals of Toluene 284	
Dealkylation of Toluene 284, Disproportionation of Toluene 285, Oxidation of Toluene 286, Chlorination of Toluene 291, Nitration of Toluene 292, Carbonylation of Toluene 294	
Chemicals from Xylenes 294	
Terephthalic Acid 295, Phthalic Anhydride 296, Isophthalic Acid 297	
References 299	

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

<b>Polymerization</b> .....	<b>301</b>
Introduction 301	
Monomers, Polymers, and Copolymers 302	
Polymerization Reactions 303	
Addition Polymerization 304, Condensation Polymerization 312, Ring Opening Polymerization 314	
Polymerization Techniques 315	
Physical Properties of Polymers 317	
Crystallinity 317, Melting Point 317, Viscosity 317, Molecular Weight 318, Classification of Polymers 320	
References 321	

## CHAPTER TWELVE

<b>Synthetic Petroleum-Based Polymers</b> .....	<b>323</b>
Introduction 323	
Thermoplastics 324	
Polyethylene 324, Polypropylene 329, Polyvinyl Chloride 332, Polystyrene 334, Nylon Resins 336, Thermoplastic Polyesters 336, Polycarbonates 337, Polyether Sulfones 339, Poly(phenylene) Oxide 340, Polyacetals 341	
Thermosetting Plastics 342	
Polyurethanes 342, Epoxy Resins 344, Unsaturated Polyesters 346, Phenol-Formaldehyde Resins 346, Amino Resins 348	

Synthetic Rubber	350
Butadiene Polymers and Copolymers	352, Nitrile Rubber 353,
Polyisoprene	354, Polychloroprene 356, Butyl Rubber 356, Ethylene
Propylene Rubber	357, Thermoplastic Elastomers 358
Synthetic Fibers	359
Polyester Fibers	359, Polyamides 362, Acrylic and Modacrylic
Fibers	368, Carbon Fibers 369, Polypropylene Fibers 370
References	371

<b>Appendix One: Conversion Factors</b>	<b>374</b>
---	------------

<b>Appendix Two: Selected Properties of Hydrogen, Important C<sub>1</sub>–C<sub>10</sub> Paraffins, Methylcyclopentane, and Cyclohexane</b>	<b>376</b>
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<b>Index</b>	<b>378</b>
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<b>About the Authors</b>	<b>392</b>
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# Preface to Second Edition

When the first edition of *Chemistry of Petrochemical Processes* was written, the intention was to introduce to the users a simplified approach to a diversified subject dealing with the chemistry and technology of various petroleum and petrochemical process. It reviewed the mechanisms of many reactions as well as the operational parameters (temperature, pressure, residence times, etc.) that directly effect products' yields and composition. To enable the readers to follow the flow of the reactants and products, the processes were illustrated with simplified flow diagrams.

Although the basic concept and the arrangement of the chapters in this second edition are the same as the first, this new edition includes many minor additions and updates related to the advances in processing and catalysis.

The petrochemical industry is a huge field that encompasses many commercial chemicals and polymers. As an example of the magnitude of the petrochemical market, the current global production of polyolefins alone is more than 80 billion tons per year and is expected to grow at a rate of 4–5% per year. Such growth necessitates much work be invested to improve processing technique and catalyst design and ensure good product qualities. This is primarily achieved by the search for new catalysts that are active and selective. The following are some of the important additions to the text:

- Because ethylene and propylene are the major building blocks for petrochemicals, alternative ways for their production have always been sought. The main route for producing ethylene and propylene is steam cracking, which is an energy extensive process. Fluid catalytic cracking (FCC) is also used to supplement the demand for these light olefins. A new process that produces a higher percentage of light olefins than FCC is deep catalytic cracking (DCC), and it is described in Chapter 3.

- The search for alternative ways to produce monomers and chemicals from sources other than oil, such as coal, has revived working using Fisher Tropsch technology, which produces in addition to fuels, light olefins, sulfur, phenols, etc. These could be used as feedstocks for petrochemicals as indicated in Chapter 4.
- Catalysts for many petroleum and petrochemical processes represent a substantial fraction of capital and operation costs. Heterogeneous catalysts are more commonly used due to the ease of separating the products. Homogeneous catalysts, on the other hand, are normally more selective and operate under milder conditions than heterogeneous types, but lack the simplicity and ease of product separation. This problem has successfully been solved for the oxo reaction by using rhodium modified with triphenylphosphine ligands that are water soluble. Thus, lyophilic products could be easily separated from the catalyst in the aqueous phase. A water soluble cobalt cluster can effectively hydroformylate higher olefins in a two-phase system using polyethylene glycol as the polar medium. This approach is described in Chapter 5.
- In the polymer field, new-generation metallocenes, which are currently used in many polyethylene and polypropylene processes, can polymerize propylene in two different modes: alternating blocks of rigid isotactic and flexible atactic. These new developments and other changes and approaches related to polymerization are noted in Chapters 11 and 12.

I hope the new additions that I felt necessary for updating this book are satisfactory to the readers.

*Sami Matar, Ph.D.*