Epoxy Selector Guide
for Infusion, Lamination, and Filament Winding
Introduction

Selecting the appropriate epoxy for your composite application should be a streamlined and uncomplicated process. This eBook will help you select an ideal epoxy that meets the necessary criteria of your application. To begin sourcing an epoxy solution, ask the following:

- Which cured and uncured properties are important to you, and how does that impact the compound you choose?
- Are the individual components or the system itself spec’d in by the end user? Or are they internally developed, allowing for flexibility?
- Do you have an existing resin process? Is that process designed around the constraints of your compound, or was the compound designed around your process and manufacturing goals?
- Will the part be pre-heated or room temperature? Will the part be heat cured or cured at room temperature? Is a post-cure process in place or available?
- What process will be used to produce the part (LRTM, HPRTM, VARTM, VIP, Pultrusion)?

These are all important questions to ask when choosing the optimal epoxy or resin system, and each of these questions are linked to each other. Adjusting one string may impact several others, and as such, an optimal balance must be reached within the compound to meet as many of your requirements as possible.

This guide is intended to assist you in answering important questions regarding your product and production goals, and how these goals will affect the properties of your compound. The following is a list of important characteristics, definitions, and potential things to consider when choosing an epoxy resin system.
Handling Properties

Epoxy resin systems can be custom-formulated to improve your manufacturing process. To gain an idea of which properties would be most suitable for your application—and to what amount/degree—here are some consideration points to make sure your system will be a great fit:

**Viscosity**

Viscosity—thickness and consistency—will influence the extent to which the material will penetrate a part or fiber substrate and will also determine thermal and conductive properties.

Viscosity is commonly measured in centipoise (cps). Low viscosity is < 800 cps, medium 800–3,000 cps, and high is > 3,000 cps.
Low Viscosity (< 800 cps)

Is high penetration into or around gaps important?
Low viscosity materials are best suited for applications where the product is required to flow easily and penetrate deeply into the surface, or fill very small or fine gaps.

Is air release important?
Entrapped air can impede the systems performance and the strength of its bond. Low viscosity epoxies eliminate this possibility as they have excellent air release properties.

Composite applications where low viscosity works best:
Infusion process, filament winding, pultrusion
Medium Viscosity (800-3,000 cps)

Is it more important to have higher mechanical strength over penetration into/around gaps?
Medium viscosity epoxies create a thickened, high-strength product. Due to their thicker consistency, medium viscosity epoxies offer less penetrability than their low viscosity counterparts.

Is thermal conductivity important?
Medium viscosity systems feature a moderate amount of heat dissipation.

Is increased mechanical strength important?
Medium viscosity systems provide greater mechanical strength and adhesion to their substrates.

Does your product need flame-retardant properties?
Medium viscosity systems can be formulated to meet UL 94V-0 flame retardant standards.

Composite applications where medium viscosity works best:
Lamination (wet lay-up), filament winding, vacuum (wet) bagging, tooling, and pultrusion
High Viscosity (> 3,000 cps)

**Is it important for your product to stay in place when it is applied?**
Pastes are highly resilient and provide excellent adhesion, very reliably keeping the product in place. They are also tough and offer heat and shock resistance.

**Is high thermal conductivity important?**
High viscosity/paste systems offer superior heat dissipation.

**Is high temperature resistance important?**
For applications that consider high heat resistance to be a top priority, high-viscosity epoxies are a great choice for both low and high temperatures.

**Is very low expansion and contraction important?**
Paste systems can be adjusted to match the coefficient of thermal expansion (CTE) of the substrate to improve adhesion.

**Composite applications where high viscosity/paste works best:**
Tooling epoxies and general purpose adhesives, Wet Layup
Mix Ratios

Epoxy resin mix ratios are the proportions of resin to hardener (two-part, Part A to Part B), and are determined by product chemistry. Mixing at the correct ratio of these two factors ensures a proper chemical reaction and avoids any reduction in its physical properties.

By Volume vs. by Weight
Depending on the application, it may be better to proportion part A and part B by volume instead of weight, and vice versa. These ratios are not interchangeable, so it is important that the same by-volume ratio is not applied directly to a by-weight one, as this can lead to problematic errors.

Fractional vs. Non-Fractional Mixing Ratios
Non-fractional mixing ratios are very convenient and easier to manage in the field, such as: 1-1, 2-1, etc. Fractional ratios require more attention to keep accurate, such as 2.3-1, 5.7-1.

Color

The color of the system can be modified with a wide variety of fillers and pigments depending on the application.

Filled vs. Unfilled
If your application requirements dictate a product containing a filler (filled system), this will impart color. If your requirements can be achieved without a filler (unfilled system), then the product will maintain the natural resin color.

Clear vs. Pigmented
The resin system can be supplied clear, if unfilled, or natural resin color if filled. A large range of pigments can be added to achieve a desired color.
Cure Time

The amount of time that it takes a system to develop its full strength will occur in stages. The complete cure time varies depending on factors such as surrounding temperature, mixture quantity, and the formulation design.

Cure time is important to keep in mind, as the faster the material reaches its full strength, the faster the end products can be put to use.

Work Time
Once the resin and hardener are mixed, there is a period of time where the product is still in a liquid state and workable. It is important to apply the material before this phase comes to an end.

Gel Time
During this phase—also known as the initial cure—the mixture transitions into a solidified material.

Complete Cure
Refers to the total amount of time it takes for the system to completely solidify and gain its full strength at a specified temperature.
Room Temperature or Heat Cure

While most systems cure at room temperature and simply need Part A and Part B to create a self-curing mixture, systems with higher temperature resistances require elevated temperatures (200–450° F) to fully cure and achieve maximum performance.

**Speed and Efficiency**
Adding heat will accelerate the cure time, making the overall curing process more efficient.

**Mass Production**
Large production runs will benefit from the faster cure time achieved through heat curing.

**Very High Temperature and Chemical Resistance**
An elevated temperature cure will allow an epoxy system to achieve a complete cure which will increase the heat resistance and chemical resistance of the system.

**Minimal Costs**
Curing at room temperature involves the lowest capital investment—all that is required are the resin and hardener materials. In order to heat cure, additional equipment such as an oven, heat lamp, or other heat sources would need to be secured.

**Small Production Runs**
Room temperature curing is suitable for small production runs.
Cured Physical Properties

Epoxy resin systems can be customized to feature a wide variety of cured physical properties. The resin and hardener chosen, as well as the curing conditions (time and temperature), can all impact the resulting properties.

It’s important to prioritize your requirements. What are the most important properties of your system?

- Thermal Resistance
- Flame Retardancy
- Mechanical Strength
- Adhesion to Substrate
- Toughness / Flexibility

Depending on the qualities you’re looking for, a system can be created to suit your project needs.
How to Choose the Optimal Private Label Manufacturing Partner

If you are looking for a private label partner for your epoxy needs, turn to the experts at Copps Industries!

At Copps Industries, we are at the cutting-edge of private label manufacturing. Due to our hands-on experience, diverse product portfolio, and dedication to custom formulation, we are well-equipped to deliver an appropriate epoxy solution for nearly any application. Our complete line of epoxy products are available for private label.

By partnering with us, you gain access to extensive corporate expertise without any capital expenditure. Additionally, we offer more than 2,500 formulations that can be used as-is or adjusted to meet specific product requirements. If you require a fully custom product, our in-house research and development, test, and analytical laboratory is ready and waiting to develop an epoxy that satisfies your application-specific criteria. Whether you need a standard, modified, or custom epoxy, we are committed to ensuring your success.

Some of the benefits of our private label program include:

- No R&D costs
- No fixed costs
- No expensive start-up costs
- No manufacturing costs
- Regulatory and environmental compliance
- Export shipping compliance

Throughout our over 40 years in business, we have worked with clients of all sizes, from entrepreneurs and small regional companies to giant international corporations, all of whom are guaranteed confidentiality. For a private label epoxy partner you can trust to deliver high-quality products, contact us or request a quote today.