



With 28 years of experience, Bill Longo is Henkel's go-to guy for caulks, sealants, and adhesives. He is never confused about silicones, but still can't figure out how a street con's shell game works.

Ask Billy

Clearing up the silicone confusion

Dear Billy,

When I'm looking for silicone, I find products in very different price ranges, yet they all claim to be 100% silicone. I'm confused! What, if any, are the differences between these silicones?

Signed,
Stumped About Silicone

Dear Stumped,

Great question! Silicone is an outstanding sealant, but you're right to be concerned about picking the right one for the job you need to do. The differences in silicones will affect application and, as you already noticed, will be reflected in the price.

Most manufacturers offer two types of 100% silicone: HM (high modulus) acetoxy silicone and LM (low modulus) oxime/neutral cure silicone.

HM acetoxy silicone is typically the less expensive of the two and is easily identified by the vinegar-like odor it has during application and curing. HM silicones cure in the presence of atmospheric moisture, have a limited application range, and only

adhere to non-porous substrates such as glass, ceramic, and some metals. HM has less elongation and feels harder than the LM formulations. OSI® Pro-Series® HM-270™ is an example of an HM silicone.

LM oxime/neutral are neutral cure silicones which offer multi-purpose uses and adhere to wide range of substrates, including porous and non-porous surfaces such as vinyl, wood, masonry, metal, glass, and ceramic. LM silicones have higher elongation and feel softer than the HM formulation. OSI® Pro-Series® VP-275™ is an LM silicone.

Finally, there is another term you may come across when silicone shopping: RTV silicone. The "RTV" stands for "room temperature vulcanization," which means it cures at room temperature without the aid of applied heat. RTV can be used when describing both HM and LM silicones.

Stickin' with you on the job,

Billy

Got a question for Billy?
Email him at Bill.Longo@us.henkel.com.