EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

Bleaching composition comprising a dye maintenance agent

The present invention relates to a process of treating fabrics with a liquid bleaching composition comprising at least 3% of a peroxygen bleach and a dye maintenance agent, wherein said process comprises the steps of contacting said fabrics with said liquid composition in its neat or diluted form and washing said fabrics with an aqueous bath comprising water and a conventional laundry detergent, preferably comprising at least one surface active agent, before and/or during and/or after the step of contacting said fabrics with said liquid composition.
Description

Technical field

[0001] The present invention relates to liquid bleaching compositions and in particular to a process of treating fabrics with a liquid bleaching composition comprising a dye maintenance agent.

Background of the invention

[0002] Bleach-containing compositions for treating fabrics are well known in the art
[0003] Peroxygen bleach-containing compositions have been extensively described in the art, especially in laundry applications as laundry additives and/or laundry pretreaters.
[0004] Indeed, it is known to use such peroxygen bleach-containing compositions in laundry applications to boost the removal of dried on (encrusted) stains/soils and "problem" stains, such as grease, coffee, tea, grass, mud/clay-containing soils, which are otherwise particularly difficult to remove. In addition, peroxygen bleaches are considered as being safer to fabrics/carpet, specifically to coloured fabrics/carpet, compared to other bleaches, as for example hypohalite bleaches.

[0005] Nevertheless, bleaching compositions have the inconvenience of having a tendency of damaging fabrics treated therewith. Indeed, said compositions may cause color damage ("discoloration") of dyed fabrics treated with said compositions, in particular dark colored fabrics dyed with sulphated dyes are prone to discoloration.

[0006] It is known in the art to formulate bleaching compositions comprising ingredients providing "color-safety benefits" to said bleaching compositions. Such ingredients providing color-safety benefits ("color safety ingredients") are included into bleaching compositions due to the tendency of peroxygen bleach to form aggressive bleach-species during the decomposition of the peroxygen bleach, upon storage or during use or thereafter. It is well known, that said aggressive bleach-species are responsible for causing damage to colored fabrics. Indeed, color safety ingredients prevent or at least reduce the formation of aggressive bleach-species and hence prevent an attack of the aggressive bleach-species on fabric dyes. For example, WO96/26999 describes a laundry pretreatment composition comprising a chelant, wherein fabric safety and/or color safety benefits are provided to said laundry pretreatment composition.

[0007] It is submitted that bleaching compositions comprising color safety ingredients show a good color safety performance. However, the prevention of discoloration of dyed fabrics when treated with liquid bleaching compositions may still be further improved. Indeed, it has been found by consumer research that it is desirable for consumers to have bleaching pretreatment / additive compositions that provide "active color protection". By "active color protection" it is meant herein the active protection of dyed fabrics against discoloration caused by interaction of a wash solution and the fabric dyes. Indeed, color protection in a bleaching composition may be provided independently of a color safety benefit or even in combination of a color safety benefit coming from color safety ingredients.

[0008] It is therefore an objective of the present invention to provide a liquid bleaching composition comprising a peroxygen bleach wherein said composition provides an active color protection benefit to fabrics treated said liquid bleaching composition.

[0009] It has now been found that this objective can be met by a process of treating fabrics as described herein.

[0010] Advantageously, the bleaching compositions as described herein also provide excellent bleaching performance.

[0011] More particularly, the compositions of the present invention provide excellent bleaching performance when used as a laundry additive and/or a laundry pretreater.

[0012] A further advantage of the bleaching compositions according to the present invention is that they are able to perform in a variety of conditions, i.e., in hard and soft water as well as when used neat or diluted.

Summary of the invention

[0013] The present invention encompasses a process of treating fabrics with a liquid bleaching composition comprising at least 3% of a peroxygen bleach and a dye maintenance agent, wherein said process comprises the steps of contacting said fabrics with said liquid composition in its neat or diluted form and washing said fabrics with an aqueous bath comprising water and a conventional laundry detergent, preferably comprising at least one surface active agent, before and/or during and/or after the step of contacting said fabrics with said liquid composition.
Detailed description of the invention

The bleaching composition

[0014] The bleaching composition according to the present invention is formulated as a liquid composition. By "liquid" it is meant to include conventional liquids, gels and pastes.

[0015] The bleaching compositions herein are preferably, but not necessarily formulated as aqueous compositions. Liquid bleaching compositions are preferred herein for convenience of use. Preferred liquid bleaching compositions of the present invention are aqueous and therefore, preferably may comprise water, more preferably may comprise water in an amount of from 60% to 98%, even more preferably of from 80% to 97% and most preferably 85% to 97% by weight of the total composition.

[0016] The pH of the liquid bleaching compositions herein, as is measured at 25°C, preferably is at least, with increasing preference in the order given, 0.1, 0.5, 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5, 4, 4.5 or 5. Independently, the pH of the liquid bleaching compositions herein, as is measured at 25°C, preferably is no more than, with increasing preference in the order given, 9, 8.5, 8, 7.5, 7, 6.5, 6 or 5.5.

[0017] In a preferred embodiment the liquid compositions according to the present invention are formulated in the neutral to the acidic pH range. It is within this neutral to acidic pH range that the optimum chemical stability and bleaching and/or cleaning performance of the peroxygen bleach as well as optimum fabric- and/or color-safety are obtained.

[0018] Accordingly, the compositions herein may further comprise an acid or a base to adjust the pH as appropriate.

[0019] Preferred acids herein are organic or inorganic acids or mixtures thereof. Preferred organic acids are acetic acid, citric acid or a mixture thereof. Preferred inorganic acids are sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid or a mixture thereof. A particularly preferred acid to be used herein is an inorganic acid and most preferred is sulfuric acid.

[0020] Typical levels of such acids, when present, are of from 0.01% to 3.0%, preferably from 0.05% to 2.0% and more preferably from 0.1% to 1.0% by weight of the total composition.

[0021] The bases to be used herein can be organic or inorganic bases. Suitable bases for use herein are the caustic alkalis, such as sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide and/or lithium hydroxide, and/or the alkali metal oxides such, as sodium and/or potassium oxide or mixtures thereof. A preferred base is a caustic alkali, more preferably sodium hydroxide and/or potassium hydroxide.

[0022] Other suitable bases include ammonia, ammonium carbonate and hydrocarbonate.

[0023] Typical levels of such bases, when present, are of from 0.01% to 1.0%, preferably from 0.05% to 0.8% and more preferably from 0.1% to 0.5% by weight of the total composition.

Peroxygen bleach

[0024] As a first essential element the bleaching compositions according to the present invention comprise a peroxygen bleach.

[0025] Suitable peroxygen bleaches to be used herein are selected from the group consisting of: hydrogen peroxide; water-soluble sources of hydrogen peroxide; organic or inorganic peracids; hydroperoxides; diacyl peroxides; and mixtures thereof.

[0026] As used herein a hydrogen peroxide source refers to any compound that produces perhydroxyl ions on contact with water. Suitable water-soluble sources of hydrogen peroxide for use herein include percarbonates, perborates and persilicates and mixtures thereof.

[0027] Suitable diacyl peroxides for use herein include aliphatic, aromatic and aliphatic-aromatic diacyl peroxides, and mixtures thereof.

[0028] Suitable aliphatic diacyl peroxides for use herein are dilauroyl peroxide, didecanoyl peroxide, dimyristoyl peroxide, or mixtures thereof. A suitable aromatic diacyl peroxide for use herein is for example benzyol peroxide. A suitable aliphatic-aromatic diacyl peroxide for use herein is for example lauroyl benzoxy peroxide.

[0029] Suitable organic or inorganic peracids for use herein include : persulphates such as monopersulfate; peroxyacids such as diperoxydodecandioic acid (DPDA); magnesium perphthalic acid; perlauric acid; perlauryl amidoperoxy caproic acid (PAP); perbenzoic and alkylperbenzoic acids; and mixtures thereof.

[0030] Suitable hydroperoxides for use herein are tert-butyl hydroperoxide, cumyl hydroperoxide, 2,4,4-trimethylpentyl-2-hydroperoxide, di-isopropylbenzene-monohydroperoxide, tert-amyl hydroperoxide and 2,5-dimethyl-hexane-2,5-dihydroperoxide and mixtures thereof. Such hydroperoxides have the advantage of being particularly safe to fabrics and color while delivering excellent bleaching performance when used in any laundry application. Furthermore, such hydroperoxides have the advantage of being particularly safe to carpets and carpet dyes whilst delivering excellent bleaching performance when used in carpet treatment applications.

[0031] A preferred peroxygen bleach herein is selected from the group consisting of: hydrogen peroxide; water-soluble sources of hydrogen peroxide; organic or inorganic peracids; hydroperoxides; and diacyl peroxides; and mix-
A more preferred peroxygen bleach herein is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen peroxide, water-soluble sources of hydrogen peroxide and diacyl peroxides and mixtures thereof. An even more preferred peroxygen bleach herein is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen peroxide, water-soluble sources of hydrogen peroxide, aliphatic diacyl peroxides, aromatic diacyl peroxides and aliphatic-aromatic diacyl peroxides and mixtures thereof. The most preferred peroxygen bleach herein is hydrogen peroxide, water-soluble sources of hydrogen peroxide or mixtures thereof.

The liquid compositions according to the present invention comprise at least 3% by weight of the total composition of said peroxygen bleach. Preferably, the bleaching composition herein may comprise from 3% to 30%, preferably from 4% to 20%, more preferably from 4.5% to 15%, even more preferably from 5% to 10%, and most preferably from 5.5% to 10% by weight of the total composition of said peroxygen bleach.

The presence of a peroxygen bleach in bleaching compositions according to the present invention contributes to the excellent bleaching and/or cleaning performance on various types of soils including on spot stains like bleachable stains (e.g., coffee, beverage, food) of the compositions of the present invention. Furthermore, peroxygen bleaches are chosen herein as oxidising agents over other oxidising agents, as for example hypohalite bleaches, as they are considered as being safer to fabrics, specifically to coloured fabrics.

By "bleachable stains" it is meant herein any soils or stains containing ingredients sensitive to bleach that can be found on any carpet, e.g., coffee or tea.

Dye maintenance agent

As a second essential ingredient the compositions according to the present invention comprise a dye maintenance agent.

Any dye maintenance agent known to those skilled in the art are suitable for use herein.

Suitable dye maintenance agent are described as cyclic amine based polymers, oligomers or copolymers in WO 99/14301 and dye maintenance polymers or oligomers in WO 00/56849, both documents being incorporated herein by reference.

Typically, the bleaching compositions according to the present invention may comprise from 0.001% to 30%, preferably from 0.01% to 15% and more preferably from 0.05% to 5% by weight of the total composition of a dye maintenance agent.

In a preferred embodiment the dye maintenance agent is a cyclic amine based polymer, oligomer or copolymer.

Preferably, said cyclic amine based polymers, oligomers or copolymers are of the general formula:

\[ T \left[ W - R_2 \right] W - T \quad A_b \]

wherein each T is independently selected from the group consisting of: H, C₁⁻C₁₂ alkyl, substituted alkyl, C₇⁻C₁₂ alkylaryl, -(CH₂)ₙCOOM, -(CH₂)ₙSO₃M, CH₂CH(OH)SO₃M, -(CH₂)ₙOSO₃M,
and \(-R_2Q;\)

- wherein \(W\) comprises at least one cyclic constituent selected from the group consisting of:

- each \(B\) is independently \(C_1-C_{12}\) alkylene, \(C_1-C_{12}\) substituted alkylene, \(C_3-C_{12}\) alkenylene, \(C_8-C_{12}\) dialkylarylene, \(C_8-C_{12}\) dialkylarylenediyl, and \(-(R_5O)_nR_5^-;\)

- each \(D\) is independently \(C_2-C_6\) alkylene;

- each \(Q\) is independently selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, \(C_1-C_{18}\) alkoxy, \(C_2-C_{18}\) hydroxy alkoxy, amino, \(C_1-C_{18}\) alkyl amino, dialkyl amino, trialkyl amino groups, heterocyclic monoamino groups and diamine groups;

- each \(R_1\) is independently selected from the group consisting of \(H, C_1-C_{8}\) alkyl and \(C_1-C_{8}\) hydroxyalkyl;

- each \(R_2\) is independently selected from the group consisting of \(C_1-C_{12}\) alkylene, \(C_1-C_{12}\) alkenylene, \(-CH_2-OH\)
  \((OR_1)-CH_2, C_8-C_{12}\) alkarylene, \(C_4-C_{12}\) dihydroxy alkylene, \(poly(C_2-C_4\) alkyleneoxy)alkylene, \(H_2CH(OH)CH_2OR_2OCH_2CH(OH)CH_2-\), and \(C_3-C_{12}\) hydrocarbyl moieties; provided that when \(R_2\) is a \(C_3-C_{12}\) hydrocarbyl moiety the hydrocarbyl moiety can comprise from 2 to 4 branching moieties of the general structure:
each R3 is independently selected from the group consisting of H, R2, O, C1-C20 hydroxyalkyl, C1-C20 alkyl, substituted alkyl, C6-C11 aryl, substituted aryl, C7-C11 alkylaryl, C1-C20 aminoalkyl, -(CH2)hCOOM, -(CH2)hSO3M, CH2CH(OH)SO3M, -(CH2)hOSO3M,

and

wherein at least about 10 mole%, preferably at least about 20 mole%, more preferably at least about 30 mole%, and most preferably at least about 50 mole% of the R3 groups are O, provided that O is only present on a tertiary N;

each R4 is independently selected from the group consisting of H, C1-C22 alkyl, C1-C22 hydroxyalkyl, aryl and C7-C22 alkylaryl;

each R5 is independently selected from the group consisting of C2-C8 alkylene, C2-C8 alkyl substituted alkylene; and

A is a compatible monovalent or di or polyvalent anion;
M is a compatible cation;
and wherein b = number necessary to balance the charge; each x is independently from 3 to 1000; each c is independently 0 or 1; each h is independently from 1 to 8; each q is independently from 0 to 6; each n is independently from 1 to 20; each r is independently from 0 to 20; and each t is independently from 0 to 1.

More preferably, said cyclic amine based polymers, oligomers or copolymers are of the above formula, wherein each R1 is H and at least one W is selected from the group consisting of:
Even more preferably, said cyclic amine based polymers, oligomers or copolymers are of the above formula, wherein R₁ is H and at least one W is selected from the group consisting of:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{R₄} \\
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R₃}
\end{array}
\]

and

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{R₄} \\
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R₃}
\end{array}
\]

Still more preferably, said cyclic amine based polymers, oligomers or copolymers are of the above formula, wherein each R₁ is H and at least one W is selected from the group consisting of:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{R₄} \\
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R₃}
\end{array}
\]

and

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{R₄} \\
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R₃}
\end{array}
\]

In a preferred embodiment according to the present invention, said cyclic amine based polymers, oligomers or copolymers are oxidized adducts selected from the group consisting of piperazine, piperidine, epichlorohydrin, epichlorohydrin benzylquat, epichlorohydrin methylquat, morpholine and mixtures thereof.

In another preferred embodiment according to the present invention, the dye maintenance agent herein is imidazole : epi-chlorohydrin copolymer (condensation oligomer of imidazole and epi-chlorohydrin at a ratio of 1:4:1).

A suitable imidazole : epi-chlorohydrin copolymer dye maintenance agent is commercially available under the trade name Sokalan PG-IME® from BASF.

It has been found that peroxygen bleach-containing bleaching compositions have the inconvenience of having a tendency of causing color damage ("discoloration") of dyed fabrics treated with said compositions, in particular dark
colored fabrics dyed with sulphated dyes are prone to discoloration. Indeed, it lies in the nature of peroxygen bleach to discolor dyed fabrics, which is an unwanted side effect of the bleaching activity of the peroxygen bleach.

[0048] It has now been found that dye maintenance agents in bleaching compositions provide an active color protection benefit.

[0049] By "active color protection" it is meant herein the active protection of dyed fabrics against discoloration caused by interaction of a wash solution and the fabric dyes ("color protection benefit"). Indeed, color protection in a bleaching composition may be provided independently of a color safety benefit or even in combination of a color safety benefit coming from color safety ingredients.

[0050] Indeed, it has been observed that dye maintenance agents specifically adhere to dye molecules deposited on fabrics, preferably sulphate groups of dye molecules, and thereby reduce the solubility of said dye molecules. Thereby, protecting said dyes from solubilising them off the fabric and thereby discoloring said fabric caused by the interaction of the bleaching composition and/or the wash solution formed by a conventional laundry detergent used in addition to the bleaching composition and the dye.

Test method for color protection

[0051] The color protection can be assessed by visual grading. The following test protocol may be applied to assess the color protection benefit as provided herein of a giving bleaching composition: 100 ml of said given bleaching composition are added into a standard washing machine in combination with 135 g of a conventional laundry detergent (e.g., DASH Essential® or DASH liquid®). A colored fabric (e.g., a fabric dyed with direct violet C111) is treated in said washing machine according to the standard procedure of the washing machine. This treatment can be repeated for 5 or 10 times.

[0052] The visual grading may be performed by a group of expert panelists using panel score units (PSU). To assess the fabric color protection benefit of a given bleaching composition a PSU-scale ranging from 0, meaning no noticeable difference in discoloration of a treated fabric versus an untreated fabric, to 4, meaning a clearly noticeable difference in discoloration of a treated fabric versus an untreated fabric, can be applied.

Process of treating fabrics

[0053] In the present invention, the bleaching composition of the present invention is used by contacting fabrics with a liquid bleaching composition. Indeed, the bleaching composition is used in a liquid form. By "in a liquid form" it is meant herein, the liquid compositions according to the present invention per se in neat or diluted form.

[0054] The compositions according to the present invention are typically used in diluted form in a laundry operation. By "in dilute form" it is meant herein that the compositions for the bleaching of fabrics according to the present invention may be diluted by the user, preferably with water. Such dilution may occur for instance in soaking applications as well as by other means such as in a washing machine. Said compositions may be used at a dilution level of up to 1500:1 (solvent:composition), preferably from 5:1 to 1000:1 and more preferably from 10:1 to 700:1 (solvent:composition).

[0055] By "in its neat form", it is to be understood that the liquid bleaching compositions are applied directly onto the fabrics to be treated without undergoing any dilution, i.e., the liquid compositions herein are applied onto the fabrics as described herein.

[0056] Fabrics to be treated herein include, but are not limited to, clothes, curtains, drapes, bed linens, bath linens, tablecloths, sleeping bags and/or tents.

[0057] By "treating a fabric", it is meant herein cleaning said and/or bleaching/disinfecting said fabric.

[0058] In the process of treating (e.g., cleaning and/or bleaching) a fabric, a bleaching composition according to the present invention is contacted with the fabrics to be treated.

[0059] This can be done either in a so-called "pretreatment mode", where a liquid bleaching composition, as defined herein, is applied neat onto said fabrics before the fabrics are washed or in a "soaking mode" where a liquid bleaching composition, as defined herein, is first diluted in an aqueous bath and the fabrics are immersed and soaked in the bath, before they are washed, or in a "through-the-wash mode", where a liquid bleaching composition, as defined herein, is added in addition to a wash liquor formed by dissolution or dispersion of a conventional laundry detergent, preferably in a washing machine.

[0060] More specifically, the pretreatment process of bleaching fabrics according to the present invention preferably comprises the steps of first contacting said fabrics with a bleaching composition according to the present invention, then allowing said fabrics to remain in contact with said composition, for a period of time sufficient to bleach said fabrics, then rinsing said fabrics with water before being washed.

[0061] The bleaching composition may be used in dilute or neat form. Where it is used diluted, the bleaching composition should remain in contact with the fabric for typically 1 to 60 minutes, preferably 5 to 30 minutes. Whereas, when the bleaching composition is used in its neat form, it should remain in contact with the fabric for a much shorter
time, typically 5 seconds to 30 minutes, preferably 1 minute to 10 minutes.

In the process herein, said fabrics are to be washed, i.e., treated with a conventional laundry detergent, preferably comprising at least one surface active agent, the washing of said fabrics with a conventional laundry detergent may be conducted before the step of contacting said fabrics with said bleaching composition and/or during the step of contacting fabrics are contacted with said bleaching composition and/or after the step where said fabrics are contacted with the bleaching composition.

In a preferred embodiment, the washing of said fabrics with a conventional laundry detergent is conducted before the step of contacting said fabrics with said bleaching composition and/or during the step of contacting fabrics are contacted with said bleaching composition. More preferably, the washing of said fabrics with a conventional laundry detergent is conducted before the step of contacting said fabrics with said bleaching composition. Indeed, it has been observed that bleaching said fabrics with the compositions according to the present invention (diluted and/or neat bleaching processes) prior to washing them with a detergent composition provides superior whiteness and stain removal with less energy and detergent than if said fabrics are washed first, then bleached.

In a preferred embodiment according to the present invention, the conventional laundry detergent as described herein are dissolved or dispersed, preferably substantially dissolved or dispersed, in the aqueous bath formed in the process according to the present invention. By "substantially dissolved or dispersed" it is meant herein, that at least 50%, preferably at least 80%, more preferably at least 90%, even more preferably at least 95%, still more preferably at least 98%, and most preferably at least 99%, of said conventional laundry detergent are dissolved or dispersed in the aqueous bath formed in the process according to the present invention.

In a preferred embodiment, the washing step according to the present invention is performed in a washing machine. The conventional detergent composition may be delivered into the washing machine either by charging the dispenser drawer of the washing machine with the detergent or by directly charging the drum of the washing machine with the detergent.

By "conventional laundry detergent" it is meant herein, a laundry detergent composition currently available on the market. Preferably, said conventional laundry detergent comprises at least one surface active agent ("surfactant" as described herein below). Said laundry detergent compositions may be formulated as powders, liquids or tablets. Suitable laundry detergent compositions are for example DASH futur®, DASH essential®, DASH liquid®, ARIEL tabs® and other products sold under the trade names ARIEL® or TIDE®.

A further advantage of process herein is the cleaning performance. In fact, the cleaning performance benefits of the combination of both liquid bleaching composition and the conventional laundry detergent is greater than the performance provided by either composition alone.

**Article of Manufacture**

In a preferred embodiment, the present invention encompasses an article of manufacture comprising: a container; a set of instructions; and the liquid bleaching composition of the present invention comprising at least 3% of a peroxygen bleach and a dye maintenance agent; wherein said set of instructions comprises instructions of treating fabrics in a process comprising the steps of contacting said fabrics with said liquid bleaching composition in its neat or diluted form and washing said fabrics with an aqueous bath comprising water and a conventional laundry detergent, preferably comprising at least one surface active agent, before and/or during and/or after the step of contacting said fabrics with said liquid composition.

Preferably, said set of instructions comprises instructions of treating fabrics in the process as described herein above.

The container herein preferably contains the liquid bleaching compositions herein. The liquid bleaching composition herein may be packaged in a variety of suitable detergent containers known to those skilled in the art.

Suitable containers herein are selected from the group consisting of plastic bottles, glass bottles and the like. Suitable plastic bottles are made of synthetic organic polymeric plastic materials.

In a preferred embodiment according to the present invention, the container herein is a plastic bottle.

The set of instructions herein may be printed directly onto the container herein and/or onto an additional package for the container herein (such as a carton or plastic box) when present. Furthermore, said usage instructions may be associated to said container and/or to said optional additional package by means of a label comprising the instructions in a printed manner applied to the container and/or said optional additional package. Said label may be glued or by any other means known to those skilled in the art affixed or attached to the container and/or said additional package when present. Alternatively, said usage instructions may be presented with the article of manufacture in a separate manner, including but not limited to, a brochure, print advertisement, electronic advertisement, and/or verbal communication.

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Optional ingredients

[0074] The bleaching compositions herein may further comprise a variety of optional ingredients such as surfactants, thickeners, builders, chelating agents, stabilisers, bleach activators, soil suspenders, soil suspending polyamine polymers, polymeric soil release agents, foam reducing systems or agents, catalysts, dye transfer agents, brighteners, perfumes, hydrotropes, solvents, pigments and dyes.

Surfactants

[0075] The compositions according to the present invention may comprise as a highly preferred but optional ingredient a surfactant.

[0076] Typically, the compositions according to the present invention may comprise from 0.01% to 30%, preferably from 0.1% to 25% and more preferably from 0.5% to 20% by weight of the total composition of a surfactant.

[0077] Suitable nonionic surfactants include alkoxylated nonionic surfactants. Preferred alkoxylated nonionic surfactants herein are ethoxylated nonionic surfactants according to the formula RO-(C2H4O)nH, wherein R is a C6 to C22 alkyl chain or a C6 to C28 alkyl benzene chain, and wherein n is from 0 to 20, preferably from 1 to 15 and, more preferably from 2 to 15 and most preferably from 2 to 12. The preferred R chains for use herein are the C6 to C22 alkyl chains.

Propoxylated nonionic surfactants and ethoxy/propoxylated ones may also be used herein instead of the ethoxylated nonionic surfactants as defined herein above or together with said surfactants.

[0078] Preferred ethoxylated nonionic surfactants are substantially linear ethoxylated nonionic surfactants according to the above formula. By "linear" it is meant herein that the fatty alcohols used as a basis of the nonionic surfactant (raw material) at least 90%, preferably at least 95%, more preferably at least 97%, and most preferably 100% by weight of the total amount of fatty alcohols of linear (i.e., straight chain) fatty alcohols.

[0079] Suitable substantially linear ethoxylated nonionic surfactants for use herein are Marlipal® 24-7 (R is a mixture of linear C12 and C14 alkyl chains, n is 7), Marlipal® 24-4 (R is a mixture of linear C12 and C14 alkyl chains, n is 4), Marlipal® 24-3 (R is a mixture of linear C12 and C14 alkyl chains, n is 3), Marlipal® 24-2 (R is a mixture of linear C12 and C14 alkyl chains, n is 2), or mixtures thereof. Preferred herein are Marlipal® 24-7, Marlipal® 24-4, or mixtures thereof. These Marlipal® surfactants are commercially available from Condea.

[0080] Preferred ethoxylated nonionic surfactants are according to the formula above and have an HLB (hydrophilic-lipophilic balance) below 16, preferably below 15, and more preferably below 14. Those ethoxylated nonionic surfactants have been found to provide good grease cutting properties.

[0081] Accordingly suitable ethoxylated nonionic surfactants for use herein are, for instance, Dobanol® 91-2.5 (HLB = 8.1; R is a mixture of C9 and C11 alkyl chains, n is 2.5), or Lutensol® TO3 (HLB = 8; R is a C13 alkyl chains, n is 3), or Lutensol® AO3 (HLB = 8; R is a mixture of C13 and C15 alkyl chains, n is 3), or Tergitol® 25L3 (HLB = 7.7; R is in the range of C12 to C14 alkyl chain length, n is 3), or Dobanol® 23-3 (HLB = 8.1; R is a mixture of C12 and C13 alkyl chains, n is 3), or Dobanol® 23-2 (HLB = 6.2; R is a mixture of C12 and C13 alkyl chains, n is 2), or Dobanol® 45-7 (HLB = 11.6; R is a mixture of C14 and C15 alkyl chains, n is 7). Preferred herein are Dobanol® 91-2.5, or Lutensol® TO3, or Lutensol® AO3, or Tergitol® 25L3, or Dobanol® 23-3, or Dobanol® 23-2, or Dobanol® 45-7, Dobanol® 91-8, or Dobanol® 91-10, or Dobanol® 91-12, or mixtures thereof. These Dobanol® surfactants are commercially available from SHELL. These Lutensol® surfactants are commercially available from BASF and these Tergitol® surfactants are commercially available from UNION CARBIDE.

[0082] Suitable chemical processes for preparing the alkoxylated nonionic surfactants for use herein include condensation of corresponding alcohols with alkylene oxide, in the desired proportions. Such processes are well known to the man skilled in the art and have been extensively described in the art.

[0083] Other suitable nonionic surfactants to be used herein include polyhydroxy fatty acid amide surfactants, or mixtures thereof, according to the formula:

\[ R^2\cdot C(O)\cdot N(R^1)\cdot Z, \]

wherein \( R^1 \) is H, or C1-C4 alkyl, C1-C4 hydrocarbyl, 2-hydroxy ethyl, 2-hydroxy propyl, or a mixture thereof, \( R^2 \) is C2-C31 hydrocarbyl, and Z is a polyhydroxyhydrocarbyl having a linear hydrocarbyl chain with at least 3 hydroxyls directly connected to the chain, or an alkoxylated derivative thereof.

[0084] Preferably, \( R^1 \) is C1-C4 alkyl, more preferably C1 or C2 alkyl and most preferably methyl, \( R^2 \) is a straight chain C2-C19 alkyl or alkenyl, preferably a straight chain C2-C18 alkyl or alkenyl, more preferably a straight chain C11-C18 alkyl or alkenyl, and most preferably a straight chain C11-C14 alkyl or alkenyl, or mixtures thereof. Z preferably will be derived from a reducing sugar in a reductive amination reaction; more preferably Z is a glycitol. Suitable reducing sugars include glucose, fructose, maltose, lactose, galactose, mannose and xylose. As raw materials, high dextrose...
corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, and high maltose corn syrup can be utilized as well as the individual sugars listed above. These corn syrups may yield a mix of sugar components for Z. It should be understood that it is by no means intended to exclude other suitable raw materials. Z preferably will be selected from the group consisting of -CH₃(CH₂OH)ₙ-CH₂OH, -CH₂(CH₂OH)-(CHOH)$_n$-CH₂OH, -CH₂(CH₂OH)$_2$-(CHOH)$_n$-CH₂OH, where n is an integer from 3 to 5, inclusive, and R" is H or a cyclic or aliphatic monosaccharide, and alkoxylated derivatives thereof. Most preferred are glycyethyl wherein n is 4, particularly CH₂(CHOH)$_4$-CH₂OH.

In formula R² - C(O) - N(R¹) - Z, R¹ can be, for example, N-methyl, N-ethyl, N-propyl, N-isopropyl, N-butyl, N-2-hydroxy ethyl, or N-2-hydroxy propyl. R² - C(O) - N- can be, for example, cocamide, stearamide, oleamide, lauramide, myristamide, capricamide, palmitamide, tallowamide and the like. Z can be 1-deoxyglucitol, 2-deoxyfructitol, 1-deoxymaltitol, 1-deoxygalactitol, 1-deoxymannitol, 1-deoxymaltotriitol and the like.

Suitable polyhydroxy fatty acid amide surfactants to be used herein may be commercially available under the trade name HOE® from Hoechst.

Methods for making polyhydroxy fatty acid amide surfactants are known in the art. In general, they can be made by reacting an alkyl amine with a reducing sugar in a reductive amination reaction to form a corresponding N-alkyl polyhydroxyamine, and then reacting the N-alkyl polyhydroxyamine with a fatty aliphatic ester or triglyceride in a condensation/amidation step to form the N-alkyl, N-polyhydroxy fatty acid amide product. Processes for making compositions containing polyhydroxy fatty acid amides are disclosed for example in GB patent specification 809,060, published February 18, 1959, by Thomas Hedley & Co., Ltd., US patent 2,985,576, issued December 20, 1960 to E.R. Wilson, US patent 2,703,798, Anthony M. Schwartz, issued March 8, 1955, US patent 1,985,424, issued December 25, 1934 to Piggott and WO92/06070, each of which is incorporated herein by reference.

Suitable zwitterionic betaine surfactants for use herein contain both a cationic hydrophilic group, i.e., a quaternary amonium group, and anionic hydrophilic group on the same molecule at a relatively wide range of pH's. The typical anionic hydrophilic groups are carboxylates and sulphonates, although other groups like sulfates, phosphonates, and the like can be used. A generic formula for the zwitterionic betaine surfactant to be used herein is:

\[ R_1^+N(R_2)(R_3)R_4X^- \]

wherein R₁ is a hydrophobic group; R₂ is hydrogen, C₁-C₆ alkyl, hydroxy alkyl or other substituted C₁-C₆ alkyl group; R₃ is C₁-C₆ alkyl, hydroxy alkyl or other substituted C₁-C₆ alkyl group which can also be joined to R₅ to form ring structures with the N, or a C₁-C₆ sulphonate group; R₄ is a moiety joining the cationic nitrogen atom to the hydrophilic group and is typically an alkylene, hydroxy alkylene, or polyalkoxy group containing from 1 to 10 carbon atoms; and X is the hydrophilic group, which is a carboxylate or sulphonate group.

Preferred hydrophobic groups R₁ are aliphatic or aromatic, saturated or unsaturated, substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbon chains that can contain linking groups such as amido groups, ester groups. More preferred R₁ is an alkyl group containing from 1 to 24 carbon atoms, preferably from 8 to 18, and more preferably from 10 to 16. These simple alkyl groups are preferred for cost and stability reasons. However, the hydrophobic group R₁ can also be an amido radical of the formula R₉-C(O)-NH-(C(R₉)₂)m, wherein R₉ is an aliphatic or aromatic, saturated or unsaturated, substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbon chain, preferably an alkyl group containing from 8 to 20 carbon atoms, preferably up to 18, more preferably up to 16, R₉ is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and hydroxy groups, and m is from 1 to 4, preferably from 2 to 3, more preferably 3, with no more than one hydroxy group in any (C(R₉)₂)m moiety.

Preferred R₂ is hydrogen, or a C₁-C₃ alkyl and more preferably methyl. Preferred R₃ is C₁-C₆ sulphonate group, or a C₁-C₃ alkyl and more preferably methyl. Preferred R₄ is (CH₄)n wherein n is an integer from 1 to 10, preferably from 1 to 6, more preferably from 1 to 3.

Some common examples of betaine/sulphobetaine are described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 2,082,275, 2,702,279 and 2,255,082, incorporated herein by reference.

Examples of particularly suitable alkylidimethyl betaines include coconut-dimethyl betaine, lauryl dimethyl betaine, decyl dimethyl betaine, 2-(N-decyl-N, N-dimethyl-ammonia) acetate, 2-(N-coco-N, N-dimethylammonio) ace-tate, myristyl dimethyl betaine, palmityl dimethyl betaine, cetyl dimethyl betaine, stearyl dimethyl betaine. For example Coconut dimethyl betaine is commercially available from Seppic under the trade name of Amonyl 265®. Lauryl betaine is commercially available from Albright & Wilson under the trade name Empigen BB/L®.

Examples of amidobetaines include cocoamidodimethylbetaine, cocoamidopropyl betaine or C₁₀-C₁₄ fatty acylamidopropylene (hydropropylene)sulphobetaine. For example C₁₀-C₁₄ fatty acylamidopropylene (hydropropylene) sulphobetaine is commercially available from Sherex Company under the trade name "Varion CAS® sulphobetaine".

A further example of betaine is Lauryl-immino-dipropionate commercially available from Rhone-Poulenc under the trade name Mirataine H₂C-HA®.

Suitable anionic surfactants to be used in the compositions herein include water-soluble salts or acids of the
formulæ $\text{R}SO_3\text{M}$ wherein $\text{R}$ preferably is a $C_{10}-C_{24}$ hydrocarbyl, preferably an alkyl or hydroxyalkyl having a $C_{12}-C_{20}$ alkyl component, more preferably a $C_{12}-C_{18}$ alkyl or hydroxyalkyl, and $\text{M}$ is $\text{H}$ or a cation, e.g., an alkali metal cation (e.g., sodium, potassium, lithium), or ammonium or substituted ammonium (e.g., methyl-, dimethyl-, and trimethyl ammonium cations and quaternary ammonium cations, such as tetramethyl-ammonium and dimethyl piperdinium cations and quaternary ammonium cations derived from alkylamines such as ethylamine, diethylamine, triethylamine, and mixtures thereof, and the like). Typically, alkyl chains of $C_{12}-C_{18}$ are preferred for lower wash temperatures (e.g., below $50^\circ\text{C}$) and $C_{16}-C_{18}$ alkyl chains are preferred for higher wash temperatures (e.g., above $50^\circ\text{C}$). Other suitable anionic surfactants for use herein are water-soluble salts or acids of the formulæ $\text{R}(\text{A})_m\text{SO}_3\text{M}$ wherein $\text{R}$ is an unsubstituted $C_{12}-C_{24}$ alkyl or hydroxyalkyl group having a $C_{10}-C_{24}$ alkyl component, preferably a $C_{12}-C_{20}$ alkyl or hydroxyalkyl, preferably $C_{12}-C_{18}$ alkyl or hydroxyalkyl, $\text{A}$ is an ethoxy or propoxy unit, $m$ is greater than zero, typically between 0.5 and 6, more preferably between 0.5 and 3, and $\text{M}$ is $\text{H}$ or a cation which can be, for example, a metal cation (e.g., sodium, potassium, lithium, calcium, magnesium, etc.), ammonium or substituted-ammonium cation. Alkyl ethoxylated sulfates as well as alkyl propoxylated sulfates are contemplated herein. Specific examples of substituted ammonium cations include methyl-, dimethyl-, trimethyl-ammonium and quaternary ammonium cations, such as tetramethyl-ammonium, dimethyl piperdinium and cations derived from alkanolamines such as ethylamine, diethylamine, triethylamine, and mixtures thereof. Typically, alkyl chains of $C_{12}-C_{18}$ alkyl polyethoxylate (2.25) sulfate (C12-C18E(2.25)SO3M), C12-C18 alkyl polyethoxylate (3.0) sulfate (C12-C18E(3.0)SO3M), and C12-C18 alkyl polyethoxylate (4.0) sulfate (C12-C18E(4.0)SO3M), wherein $\text{M}$ is conveniently selected from sodium and potassium.

Suitable linear alkyl sulphonates for use herein include water-soluble salts or acids of the formulæ $\text{R}SO_3\text{M}$ wherein $\text{R}$ is a $C_6-C_{20}$ linear or branched, saturated or unsaturated alkyl group, preferably a $C_8-C_{18}$ alkyl group and preferably a $C_{14}-C_{17}$ alkyl group, and $\text{M}$ is $\text{H}$ or a cation, e.g., an alkali metal cation (e.g., sodium, potassium, lithium), or ammonium or substituted ammonium (e.g., methyl-, dimethyl-, and trimethyl ammonium cations and quaternary ammonium cations, such as tetramethyl-ammonium and dimethyl piperdinium cations and quaternary ammonium cations derived from alkylamines such as ethylamine, diethylamine, triethylamine, and mixtures thereof, and the like). Suitable alkyl sulphonates for use herein include water-soluble salts or acids of the formulæ $\text{RO}(\text{A})_m\text{SO}_3\text{M}$ wherein $\text{R}$ is an alkyl, preferably a benzy1, substituted by a $C_6-C_{20}$ linear or branched saturated or unsaturated alkyl group, preferably a $C_8-C_{18}$ alkyl group and more preferably a $C_{10}-C_{18}$ alkyl group, and $\text{M}$ is $\text{H}$ or a cation, e.g., an alkali metal cation (e.g., sodium, potassium, lithium, calcium, magnesium, and the like) or ammonium or substituted ammonium (e.g., methyl-, dimethyl-, trimethyl-ammonium and quaternary ammonium cations and quaternary ammonium cations and quaternary ammonium cations derived from alkylamines such as ethylamine, diethylamine, triethylamine, and mixtures thereof, and the like). Particularly suitable linear alkyl sulphonates include $C_{14}-C_{17}$ paraffin sulphonate like Hostapur® SAS commercially available from Hoechst. An example of commercially available alkyl aryl sulphonate is Lauryl aryl sulphonate from Su.Ma. Particularly preferred alkyl aryl sulphonates are alkyl benzene sulphonates commercially available under trade name Nansa® available from Albright & Wilson.

By "linear alkyl sulphonate" it is meant herein a non-substituted alkyl sulphonate wherein the alkyl chain comprises from 8 to 20 carbon atoms, preferably from 8 to 18 carbon atoms, and more preferably from 14 to 17 carbon atoms, and wherein this alkyl chain is sulphonated at one terminus.

Suitable alkoxylated sulphonate surfactants for use herein are according to the formulæ $\text{R}(\text{A})_m\text{SO}_3\text{M}$ wherein $\text{R}$ is an unsubstituted $C_6-C_{20}$ alkyl, hydroxyalkyl or alkyl aryl group, having a linear or branched $C_6-C_{20}$ alkyl component, preferably a $C_{12}-C_{20}$ alkyl or hydroxyalkyl, more preferably a $C_{12}-C_{18}$ alkyl or hydroxyalkyl, $\text{A}$ is an ethoxy or propoxy or butoxy unit, $m$ is greater than zero, typically between 0.5 and 6, more preferably between 0.5 and 3, and $\text{M}$ is $\text{H}$ or a cation which can be, for example, a metal cation (e.g., sodium, potassium, lithium, calcium, magnesium, etc.), ammonium or substituted-ammonium cation. Alkyl ethoxylated sulfonates, alkyl butoxylated sulfonates as well as alkyl propoxylated sulfonates are contemplated herein. Specific examples of substituted ammonium cations include methyl-, dimethyl-, trimethyl-ammonium and quaternary ammonium cations, such as tetramethyl-ammonium, dimethyl piperdinium and cations derived from alkylamines such as ethylamine, diethylamine, triethylamine, and mixtures thereof, and the like. Exemplary surfactants are $C_{12}-C_{18}$ alkyl polyethoxylate (1.0) sulfate (C12-C18E(1.0)SM), $C_{12}-C_{18}$ alkyl polyethoxylate (2.25) sulfate (C12-C18E(2.25)SM), $C_{12}-C_{18}$ alkyl polyethoxylate (3.0) sulfate (C12-C18E(3.0)SM), and $C_{12}-C_{18}$ alkyl polyethoxylate (4.0) sulfate (C12-C18E(4.0)SM), wherein $\text{M}$ is conveniently selected from sodium and potassium. Particularly suitable alkoxylated sulphonates include alkyl aryl polyether sulphonate like Triton X-200® commercially available from Union Carbide.
wherein R is a C₆-C₂₀ linear or branched, saturated or unsaturated alkyl group, preferably a C₁₂-C₁₈ alkyl group and more preferably a C₁₄-C₁₆ alkyl group, and X⁺ is H or a cation, e.g., an alkali metal cation (e.g., sodium, potassium, lithium, calcium, magnesium and the like). Particularly suitable C₆-C₂₀ alkyl alkoxyalted linear or branched diphenyl oxide disulphonate surfactants to be used herein are the C₁₂ branched di phenyl oxide disulphonic acid and C₁₆ linear di phenyl oxide disulphonate sodium salt respectively commercially available by DOW under the trade name Dowfax 2A1® and Dowfax 8390®.

[0104] Other anionic surfactants suitable herein include sulfosuccinate surfactants, alkyl carboxylate surfactants, sulfosuccinaminate surfactants and sulfosuccinimide surfactants.

[0105] Suitable alkyl carboxylate surfactants for use herein are according to the formula RCO₂M wherein : R represents a hydrocarbon group selected from the group consisting of straight or branched alkyl radicals containing from 6 to 20, preferably 8 to 18, more preferably 10 to 16, carbon atoms and alkyl phenyl radicals containing from 6 to 18 carbon atoms in the alkyl group. M is H or a cation, e.g., an alkali metal cation (e.g., sodium, potassium, lithium, calcium, magnesium and the like) or ammonium or substituted ammonium (e.g., methyl-, dimethyl-, and trimethyl ammonium cations and quaternary ammonium cations and quaternary ammonium cations derived from alkylamines such as ethylamine, diethylamine, triethylamine, and mixtures thereof, and the like).

[0106] Other suitable surfactants useful for deterging purposes can also be used herein. These can include salts (including, for example, sodium, potassium, ammonium, and substituted ammonium salts such as mono-, di- and triethanolamine salts) of soap, sulphonated polycarboxylic acids prepared by sulphonation of the pyrolyzed product of alkaline earth metal citrates, e.g., as described in British patent specification No. 1,082,179, C₈-C₂₄ alkylolethoxysulfates (containing up to 10 moles of ethylene oxide); alkyl ester sulphonates such as C₁₄-₁₆ methyl ester sulphonates; acyl glycerol sulphonates, fatty oleyl glycerol sulfoates, alkyl phenol ethylene oxide ether sulfoates, alkyl phosphates, isethionates such as the acyl isethionates, N-acyl taurates, sulfates of alkylpolyglycosides and salts of fatty acid derivatives of alkyl polyglycosides such as the sulfates of alkylpolyglycosides (the nonionic nonsulfated compounds being described below), branched primary alkyl sulfates, alkyl polyethoxy carboxylates such as those of the formula RO(CH₂CH₂O)ₖCH₂COO-M⁺ wherein R is a C₈-C₂₂ alkyl, k is an integer from 0 to 10, and M is a soluble salt-forming cation. Resin acids and hydrogenated resin acids are also suitable, such as rosin, hydrogenated rosin, and resin acids and hydrogenated resin acids present in or derived from tall oil. Further examples are given in "Surface Active Agents and Detergents" (Vol. I and II by Schwartz, Perry and Berch). A variety of such surfactants are also generally disclosed in U.S. Patent 3,929,678, issued December 30, 1975, to Laughlin, et al. at Column 23, line 58 through Column 29, line 23 (herein incorporated by reference).

[0107] Other suitable anionic surfactants to be used herein also include acyl sarcosinate, in its acid and/or salt form. Being derivatives of natural fatty acids, said acyl sarcosinates are rapidly and completely biodegradable and have good skin compatibility.

[0108] Accordingly, suitable long chain acyl sarcosinates to be used herein include C₁₂ acyl sarcosinate (i.e., an acyl sarcosinate according to the above formula wherein M is hydrogen and R is an alkyl group of 11 carbon atoms) and C₁₄ acyl sarcosinate (i.e., an acyl sarcosinate according to the above formula wherein M is hydrogen and R is an alkyl group of 13 carbon atoms). C₁₂ acyl sarcosinate is commercially available, for example, as Hamposyl L-30® supplied by Hampshire. C₁₄ acyl sarcosinate is commercially available, for example, as Hamposyl M-30® supplied by Hampshire.

[0109] Suitable amphoteric surfactants to be used herein include amine oxides having the following formula R₁R₂R₃NO wherein each of R₁, R₂ and R₃ is independently a saturated substituted or unsubstituted, linear or branched hydrocarbon chains of from 1 to 30 carbon atoms. Preferred amine oxide surfactants to be used according to the present invention are amine oxides having the following formula R₁R₂R₃NO wherein R₁ is an hydrocarbon chain comprising from 1 to 30 carbon atoms, preferably from 6 to 20, more preferably from 8 to 16, preferably from 8 to 12, and wherein R₂ and R₃ are independently saturated substituted or unsubstituted, linear or branched hydrocarbon chains comprising from 1 to 4 carbon atoms, preferably from 1 to 3 carbon atoms, and more preferably are methyl groups. R₁ may be a saturated substituted or unsubstituted linear or branched hydrocarbon chain. Suitable amine oxides for use herein are for instance natural blend C₆-C₁₀ amine oxides as well as C₁₂-C₁₆ amine oxides commercially available from Hoechst.
The compositions according to the present invention may comprise as a highly preferred, but optional ingredient an anti-resoiling polymer.

Suitable anti-resoiling polymers include soil suspending polyamine polymers. Any soil suspending polyamine polymer known to those skilled in the art may also be used herein. Particularly suitable polyamine polymers for use herein are alkoxylated polyamines. Such materials can conveniently be represented as molecules of the empirical structures with repeating units:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Amine form} & : \\
& \left[ \text{N} \quad \underbrace{\text{R}}_{\text{alkoxy}} \right] \quad n \\
& \quad (\text{alkoxy})y \\
\text{Quaternized form} & : \\
& \left[ \text{N}^+ \quad \underbrace{\text{R}}_{\text{alkoxy}} \right] \quad n \quad nX^- \\
& \quad (\text{alkoxy})y
\end{align*}
\]

wherein R is a hydrocarbyl group, usually of 2-6 carbon atoms; R₁ may be a C₁₂-C₂₀ hydrocarbon; the alkoxy groups are ethoxy, propoxy, and the like, and y is from 2 to 30, most preferably from 7 to 20; n is an integer of at least 2, preferably from 2 to 40, most preferably from 2 to 5; and X⁻ is an anion such as halide or methylsulfate, resulting from the quaternization reaction.

Highly preferred polyamines for use herein are the so-called ethoxylated polyethylene amines, i.e., the polymerized reaction product of ethylene oxide with ethylenimine, having the general formula:

\[
(\text{EtO})y \left[ \text{N} \quad \underbrace{\text{CH}_2 \quad \text{CH}_2 \quad} \right] \quad n \quad \text{N}(\text{EtO})y
\]

wherein y is from 2 to 50, preferably from 5 to 30, and n is from 1 to 40, preferably from 2 to 40. Particularly preferred for use herein is an ethoxylated polyethylene amine, in particular an ethoxylated polyethylene amine wherein n=2 and y=20, and an ethoxylated polyethylene amine wherein n=40 and y=7.

Suitable ethoxylated polyethylene amines are commercially available from Nippon Shokubai CO., LTD under the product names ESP-0620A® (ethoxylated polyethylene amine wherein n=2 and y=20) or from BASF under the product names ES-8165 and from BASF under the product name LUTENSIT K - 187/50® (ethoxylated polyethylene amine wherein n=40 and y=7).

Furthermore, highly preferred polyamines for use herein are the so-called ethoxylated polyethylene quaternized amines having the general formula:
wherein \( y \) is from 2 to 50, preferably from 5 to 30, and \( n \) is from 1 to 40, preferably from 2 to 40 and \( R_1 \) and \( R_2 \) are independently a C\(_{1-20}\) hydrocarbon. Particularly preferred for use herein is an ethoxylated polyethylene amine, in particular an ethoxylated polyethylene amine wherein \( n=2 \) and \( y=20 \), and an ethoxylated polyethylene amine wherein \( n=40 \) and \( y=7 \).

[0115] Particularly preferred herein is 24-Ethoxylated Hexamethylene Diamine Quaternized methyl chloride (EHDQ), commercially available from BASF under the trade name Lutensit K-HD 96®.

Thickener

[0116] The compositions according to the present invention may comprise as a highly preferred, but optional ingredient a thickener.

[0117] Preferred compositions of the present invention may have a viscosity of 1 cps or greater, more preferably of from 5 to 5000 cps, and still more preferably of from 10 to 2500 cps when measured with a CSL\(^2\) 100® Rheometer at 20\(^{\circ}\)C with a 4 cm spindle (linear increment from 10 to 100 dyne/cm\(^2\) in 2 minutes).

[0118] Typically, the bleaching compositions according to the present invention may comprise from 0.001% to 10%, preferably from 0.05% to 5% and more preferably from 0.1% to 1.0% by weight of the total composition of a thickener.

Alkoxylated benzoic acid

[0119] The compositions according to the present invention, preferably the compositions according to the present invention used in a process of treating a fabric, as described herein, may comprise as a highly preferred, but optional ingredient a alkoxylated benzoic acid or a salt thereof.

[0120] Generally, the alkoxylated benzoic acid or the salt thereof has the general formula:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{COOM} \\
\text{OR'}
\end{align*}
\]

wherein: the substituents of the benzene ring \( X \) and \( Y \) are independently selected from -H, or -OR'; \( R' \) is independently selected from C\(_{1-20}\) linear or branched alkyl chains, preferably \( R' \) is independently selected from C\(_{1-5}\) linear or branched alkyl chains, more preferably \( R' \) is -CH\(_3\), and; \( M \) is hydrogen, a cation or a cationic moiety. Preferably, \( M \) is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkali metal ions and alkaline earth metal ions. More preferably, \( M \) is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, sodium and potassium. Even more preferably, \( M \) is hydrogen.

[0121] Preferably, said alkoxylated benzoic acid or a salt thereof, is selected from the group consisting of: a monoalkoxy benzoic acid, or a salt thereof, a dialkoxy benzoic acid, or a salt thereof; a trialkoxy benzoic acid, or a salt thereof; and a mixture thereof. More preferably, said alkoxylated benzoic acid or a salt thereof, is selected from the group consisting of: a dialkoxy benzoic acid, or a salt thereof; a trialkoxy benzoic acid, or a salt thereof; and a mixture thereof. Even more preferably, said alkoxylated benzoic acid or a salt thereof, is a trimethoxy benzoic acid or a salt thereof.

[0122] In a highly preferred embodiment of the present invention, said alkoxylated benzoic acid or the salt thereof is a trimethoxy benzoic acid or a salt thereof (TMBA), wherein in the above general formula: the substituents of the benzene ring \( Y \) and \( X \) are -OR'; \( R' \) is -CH\(_3\) and; \( M \) is hydrogen, a cation or a cationic moiety.
Preferably, said alkoxylated benzoic acid or the salt thereof is selected from the group consisting of 3,4,5-trimethoxy benzoic acid, a salt thereof, 2,3,4-trimethoxy benzoic acid, a salt thereof, 2,4,5-trimethoxy benzoic acid, a salt thereof and a mixture thereof. More preferably, said alkoxylated benzoic acid or the salt thereof is 3,4,5-trimethoxy benzoic acid.

Suitable monoalkoxy benzoic acids or salts thereof are commercially available from Aldrich, in particular m-methoxy benzoic acid is commercially available from Aldrich. Suitable trimethoxy benzoic acids or salts thereof are commercially available from Aldrich and Merck.

Typically, the bleaching composition according to the present invention may comprise from 0.001% to 5%, preferably from 0.005% to 2.5% and more preferably from 0.01% to 1.0% by weight of the total composition of said alkoxylated benzoic acid or a salt thereof.

The bleaching compositions of the present invention may further comprise one or more builders and/or a modified polycarboxylate co-builder.

Suitable builders are selected from the group consisting of: organic acids and salts thereof; polycarboxylates; and mixtures thereof. Typically said builders have a calcium chelating constant (pKCa) of at least 3. Herein the pKCa the value of a builder or a mixture thereof is measured using a 0.1M NH₄Cl-NH₄OH buffer (pH 10 at 25°C) and a 0.1% solution of said builder or mixture thereof with a standard calcium ion electrode.

Examples of builders are organic acids like citric acid, lactic acid, tartaric acid, oxalic acid, malic acid, monosuccinic acid, disuccinic acid, oxydisuccinic acid, carboxymethyloxyxsuccinic acid, diglycolic acid, carboxymethyl tartronate, ditartronate and other organic acids or mixtures thereof.

Suitable salts of organic acids include alkaline, preferably sodium or potassium, alkaline earth metal, ammonium or alkanolamine salts.

Other suitable builders include a wide variety of polycarboxylate compounds. As used herein, "polycarboxylate" refers to compounds having a plurality of carboxylate groups, preferably at least 3 carboxylates. Polycarboxylate builder can generally be added to the composition in acid form, but can also be added in the form of a neutralized salt or "overbased". When utilized in salt form, alkalized metals, such as sodium, potassium, and lithium, or alkanolammonium salts are preferred.

Useful polycarboxylates include homopolymers of acrylic acid and copolymers of acrylic acid and maleic acid.

Other useful polycarboxylate builders include the ether hydroxypolycarboxylates, copolymers of maleic anhydride with ethylene or vinyl methyl ether, 1,3,5-trihydroxy benzene-2,4,6-trisulfonic acid, and carboxymethyoxyxsuccinic acid, the various alkaline metal, ammonium and substituted ammonium salts of polyacetic acids such as nitritriacetic acid, as well as polycarboxylates such as mellitic acid, succinic acid, oxydisuccinic acid, polymaleic acid, benzene 1,3,5-tricarboxylic acid, carboxymethyoxyxsuccinic acid, and soluble salts thereof.

Suitable polycarboxylates are commercially available from Rohm & Haas under the trade name Norasol® or Acusol®.

Preferred builders herein are selected from the group consisting of: citric acid; tartaric acid; tartrate monosuccinate; tartrate disuccinate; lactic acid; oxalic acid; and malic acid; and mixtures thereof. Even more preferred builders herein are selected from the group consisting of: citric acid; tartaric acid; tartrate monosuccinate; tartrate disuccinate; and malic acid; and mixtures thereof. The most preferred builders herein are selected from the group consisting of: citric acid; tartaric acid; tartrate monosuccinate; and tartrate disuccinate; and mixtures thereof.

Typically the bleaching compositions herein may comprise up to 40%, preferably from 0.01% to 25%, more preferably from 0.1% to 15%, and most preferably from 0.5% to 10% by weight of the total composition of said builder.

The compositions of the present invention may further comprise a modified polycarboxylate co-builder.

The term "polycarboxylate" refers to compounds having a plurality of carboxylate groups, preferably at least 3 carboxylates.

By "modified polycarboxylate" it is meant herein that at least at one end of the polycarboxylate compound, i.e., the polycarboxylate chain, said compound is modified by a functional group, e.g., a phosphono group.

Preferred modified polycarboxylate co-builders are polycarboxylates with phosphono end groups.

By "phosphono end group" it is meant herein a phosphono functional group according to the formula:
wherein each M is independently H or a cation, preferably both M are H.

Example of suitable polycarboxylates with phosphono end groups are copolymers of acrylic acid and maleic acid having a phosphono end group and homopolymers of acrylic acid having a phosphono end group.

A preferred modified polycarboxylate is a copolymer of acrylic acid and maleic acid with a phosphonic/phosphono end group according to the general formula:

having an average molecular weight of from 1000 to 100000, preferably an average molecular weight of from 1000 to 20000, more preferably an average molecular weight of from 1000 to 10000, and most preferably an average molecular weight of from 1500 to 5000; wherein n is from 10 mol% to 90 mol%, preferably 80 mol% and m is from 10 mol% to 90 mol%, preferably 20 mol%.

Accordingly, an example of a suitable modified polycarboxylate is a copolymer of acrylic acid and maleic acid (80/20) with a phosphonic/phosphono end group according to the formula:

wherein n is 80 mol% and m is 20 mol%; having an average molecular weight of 2000.

Such modified polycarboxylate are available from Rohm & Haas under the trade name Acusol 425®, Acusol 420® or Acusol 470®.

Typically the bleaching compositions herein may comprise up to 40%, preferably from 0.01% to 25%, more preferably from 0.1% to 15%, and most preferably from 0.5% to 5% by weight of the total composition of said modified polycarboxylate co-builder.

Chelating agents

The bleaching compositions of the present invention may comprise a chelating agent as a preferred optional ingredient. Suitable chelating agents may be any of those known to those skilled in the art, such as the ones selected from the group comprising phosphonate chelating agents, amino carboxylate chelating agents, other carboxylate chelating agents, polyfunctionally-substituted aromatic chelating agents, ethylenediamine N,N'-disuccinic acids, or mixtures thereof.

A chelating agent may be desired in the compositions of the present invention as it allows to increase the ionic strength of the compositions herein and thus their stain removal and bleaching performance on various surfaces. The presence of chelating agents may also contribute to reduce the tensile strength loss of fabrics and/or color damage, especially in a laundry through the wash application. Indeed, the chelating agents inactivate the metal ions present on the surface of the fabrics and/or in the cleaning compositions (neat or diluted) that otherwise would contribute to the radical decomposition of the peroxygen bleach.

Suitable phosphonate chelating agents to be used herein may include alkali metal ethane 1-hydroxy diphos-
phonates (HEDP), alkylene poly (alkylene phosphonate), as well as amino phosphonate compounds, including amino aminotri(methylene phosphonic acid) (ATMP), nitrilo trimethylene phosphonates (NTP), ethylene diamine tetra methylene phosphonates, and diethylene triamine penta methylene phosphonates (DTPMP). The phosphonate compounds may be present either in their acid form or as salts of different cations on some or all of their acid functionalities. Preferred phosphate chelating agents to be used herein are diethylene triamine penta phosphonate (DTPMP) and ethane 1-hydroxy diphosphonate (HEDP). Such phosphate chelating agents are commercially available from Monsanto under the trade name DEQUEST®.

Polynuclearly-substituted aromatic chelating agents may also be useful in the compositions herein. See U. S. patent 3,812,044, issued May 21, 1974, to Connor et al. Preferred compounds of this type in acid form are dihydroxydisulfobenzenes such as 1,2-dihydroxy-3,5-disulfobenzene.

A preferred biodegradable chelating agent for use herein is ethylene diamine N,N'- disuccinic acid, or alkali metal, or alkaline earth, ammonium or substitutes ammonium salts thereof or mixtures thereof. Ethylenediamine N,N'- disuccinic acids, especially the (S,S) isomer, have been extensively described in US patent 4, 704, 233, November 3, 1987, to Hartman and Perkins. Ethylenediamine N,N'- disuccinic acid is, for instance, commercially available under the tradename ssEDDS® from Palmer Research Laboratories.

Suitable amino carboxylates to be used herein include ethylene diamine tetra acetates, diethylene triamine pentaacetates, diethylene triamine pentaacetate (DTPA), N- hydroxyethyl diethylene diamine triacetates, nitrotri-acetates, ethylenediamine tetrapropionates, triethylenetetraaminehexa-acetates, ethanol diglycines, propylene diamine tetraacetic acid (PDTA) and methyl glycine di-acetic acid (MGDA), both in their acid form, or in their alkali metal, ammonium, and substituted ammonium salt forms. Particularly suitable amino carboxylates to be used herein are diethylene triamine penta acetic acid, propylene diamine tetracetic acid (PDTA) which is, for instance, commercially available from BASF under the trade name Trilon FS® and methyl glycine di-acetic acid (MGDA).

Another chelating agent for use herein include salicylic acid, aspartic acid, glutamic acid, glycine, malonic acid or mixtures thereof.

Further carboxylate chelating agents to be used herein include salicylic acid, aspartic acid, glutamic acid, glycine, malonic acid or mixtures thereof.

Another chelating agent for use herein is of the formula:

\[
R_1R_2R_3R_4\text{COOH} \quad \text{OH} \quad \text{NH} \quad R_7 \quad R_8
\]

wherein \(R_1, R_2, R_3, \text{and } R_4\) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, alkyl, alkoxy, aryl, arylolxy, -Cl, -Br, -NO_2, -C(O)R', and -SO_2R'; wherein \(R'\) is selected from the group consisting of -H, -OH, alkyl, alkoxy, aryl, and aryloxy; \(R''\) is selected from the group consisting of alkyl, alkoxy, aryl, and aryloxy; and \(R_6, R_7, \text{and } R_8\) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H and alkyl.

Particularly preferred chelating agents to be used herein are amino aminotri(methylene phosphonic acid), diethylene-triamino-pentacetic acid, diethylene triamine penta methylene phosphonate, 1-hydroxy ethane diphosphonate, ethylenediamine N, N'-disuccinic acid, and mixtures thereof.

Typically, the bleaching compositions according to the present invention may comprise up to 5%, preferably from 0.01% to 1.5% by weight and more preferably from 0.01% to 0.5% by weight of the total composition of a chelating agent.

**Solvents**

The bleaching compositions according to the present invention may further comprise a solvent.

Preferred solvents herein include hydrophobic solvents, hydrophilic solvents and mixtures hereof.

To define the hydrophilic or hydrophobic character of a solvent herein, the following hydrophilic index (HI) is used:

\[
\text{HI} = \left( \frac{\text{molecular weight of the hydrophilic part of the solvent}}{\text{total molecular weight of the solvent}} \right) \times 100
\]
By "hydrophilic part" of a given solvent it is meant herein all the groups O, CO, OH, of a given solvent.

By "molecular weight of the hydrophilic part of a solvent" it is meant herein the total molecular weight of all the hydrophilic parts of a given solvent.

The hydrophilic solvents to be used herein have a hydrophilic index of more than 18, preferably more than 25, and more preferably more than 30, and the hydrophobic solvents to the used herein have a hydrophilic index of less than 18, preferably less than 17 and more preferably 16 or less.

Suitable hydrophobic solvents to be used herein include paraffins, terpenes or terpene derivatives, as well as alkoxylated aliphatic or aromatic alcohols, aliphatic or aromatic alcohols, glycols or alkoxylated glycols, and mixtures thereof, all these solvents have a hydrophilic index of less than 18.

Suitable terpenes (hydrophilic index of 0) are mono- and bicyclic monoterpenes, especially those of the hydrocarbon class, which include the terpinenes, terpinolenes, limonenes and pinenes and mixtures thereof. Highly preferred materials of this type are d-limonene, dipentene, alpha-pinene and/or beta-pinene. For example, pinene is commercially available from SCM Glidco (Jacksonville) under the name Alpha Pinene P&F®.

Suitable terpenes such as alcohols, aldehydes, esters, and ketones, which have a hydrophilic index of less than 18, can also be used herein. Such materials are commercially available as, for example, the a and b isomers of terpineol and linalool.

All type of paraffins (hydrophilic index of 0) can be used herein, both linear and branched, containing from 2 to 20, preferably from 4 to 10, more preferably from 6 to 8 carbon atoms. Preferred herein is octane. Octane is commercially available for example from BASF.

Suitable hydrophobic alkoxylated aliphatic or aromatic alcohols to be used herein are according to the formula R-(A)n-OH wherein R is a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated alkyl group, or alkyl substituted or non-alkyl substituted aryl group of from 1 to 20, preferably from 2 to 15 and more preferably from 2 to 10 carbon atoms, wherein A is an alkoxy group preferably an butoxy, propoxy and/or ethoxy group, and n is an integer of from 1 to 5, preferably 1 to 2. Suitable hydrophobic alkoxylated alcohol to be used herein is 1-methoxy-11-dodecanol (HI = 15).

Suitable hydrophobic aliphatic or aromatic alcohols to be used herein are according to the formula R-OH wherein R is a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated alkyl group, or alkyl substituted or non-alkyl substituted aryl group of from 1 to 20, preferably from 2 to 15 and more preferably from 2 to 10 carbon atoms. Suitable aliphatic alcohols to be used herein include linear alcohols like decanol (HI = 7). Suitable aromatic alcohol to be used herein is benzyl alcohol (HI = 16).

Suitable hydrophilic glycols to be used herein are according to the formula HO-CR1R2-OH wherein R1 and R2 are independently H or a C2-C10 saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon chain and/or cyclic hydrocarbon chain. Suitable glycol to be used herein is dodecaneglycol (HI = 16).

Suitable hydrophilic alkoxylated glycols to be used herein are according to the formula R-(A)n-R1-OH wherein R is a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated alkyl group, or alkyl substituted or non-alkyl substituted aryl group of from 1 to 20, preferably from 2 to 15 and more preferably from 2 to 10 carbon atoms, wherein R1 is H or a linear saturated or unsaturated alkyl of from 1 to 20, preferably from 2 to 15 and more preferably from 2 to 10 carbon atoms, and A is an alkoxy group preferably an ethoxy, methoxy, and/or propoxy group and n is from 1 to 5, preferably 1 to 2. Suitable alkoxylated glycol to be used herein is methoxy octadecanol (HI = 11).

Particularly preferred hydrophobic solvents to be used herein include d-limonene, dipentene, alpha-pinene, beta-pinene, octane, benzyl alcohol, or mixtures thereof.

Suitable hydrophilic solvents to be used herein include alkoxylated aliphatic or aromatic alcohols, aliphatic or aromatic alcohols, glycols or alkoxylated glycols, and mixtures thereof, all these solvents having a hydrophilic index of more than 18.

Suitable hydrophobic alkoxylated aliphatic or aromatic alcohols to be used herein are according to the formula R-(A)n-R1-OH wherein R is a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated alkyl group, or alkyl substituted or non-alkyl substituted aryl group of from 1 to 20, preferably from 2 to 15 and more preferably from 2 to 10 carbon atoms, wherein A is an alkoxy group preferably a butoxy, propoxy and/or ethoxy group, and n is an integer of from 1 to 5, preferably 1 to 2. Particularly suitable alkoxylated alcohols to be used herein include methoxy propanol (HI = 37), ethoxy propanol (HI = 32), propoxy propanol (HI = 28) and/or butoxy propanol (HI = 27).

Suitable hydrophilic alkoxylated glycols to be used herein are according to the formula HO-CR1R2-OH wherein R1 and R2 are independently H or a C2-C10 saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon chain and/or cyclic hydrocarbon chain. Particularly suitable glycol to be used herein is propanediol (HI = 45).

Suitable hydrophilic alkoxylated glycols to be used herein are according to the formula R-(A)n-R1-OH wherein R is H, OH, a linear saturated or unsaturated alkyl of from 1 to 20, preferably from 2 to 15 and more preferably from 2 to 10 carbon atoms, and A is an alkoxy group preferably an butoxy, propoxy and/or ethoxy group, and n is an integer of from 1 to 5, preferably 1 to 2. Particularly suitable hydrophilic aliphatic or aromatic solvents to be used herein include alkoxylated aliphatic or aromatic alcohols, aliphatic or aromatic alcohols, glycols or alkoxylated glycols, and mixtures thereof, all these solvents having a hydrophilic index of more than 18.

Suitable terpenes (hydrophilic index of 0) are mono- and bicyclic monoterpenes, especially those of the hydrocarbon class, which include the terpinenes, terpinolenes, limonenes and pinenes and mixtures thereof. Particularly preferred materials of this type are d-limonene, dipentene, alpha-pinene and/or beta-pinene. For example, pinene is commercially available from SCM Glidco (Jacksonville) under the name Alpha Pinene P&F®. Terpene derivatives such as alcohols, aldehydes, esters, and ketones, which have a hydrophilic index of less than 18, can also be used herein. Such materials are commercially available as, for example, the a and b isomers of terpineol and linalool.

All type of paraffins (hydrophilic index of 0) can be used herein, both linear and branched, containing from 2 to 20, preferably from 4 to 10, more preferably from 6 to 8 carbon atoms. Preferred herein is octane. Octane is commercially available from BASF.

Suitable hydrophobic alkoxylated aliphatic or aromatic alcohols to be used herein are according to the formula R-(A)n-R1-OH wherein R is a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated alkyl group, or alkyl substituted or non-alkyl substituted aryl group of from 1 to 20, preferably from 2 to 15 and more preferably from 2 to 10 carbon atoms, wherein R1 is H or a linear saturated or unsaturated alkyl of from 1 to 20, preferably from 2 to 15 and more preferably from 2 to 10 carbon atoms, and A is an alkoxy group preferably an ethoxy, methoxy, and/or propoxy group and n is from 1 to 5, preferably 1 to 2. Suitable alkoxylated glycol to be used herein is methoxy octadecanol (HI = 11).

Particularly preferred hydrophilic solvents to be used herein include d-limonene, dipentene, alpha-pinene, beta-pinene, octane, benzyl alcohol, or mixtures thereof.

Suitable hydrophilic solvents to be used herein include alkoxylated aliphatic or aromatic alcohols, aliphatic or aromatic alcohols, glycols or alkoxylated glycols, and mixtures thereof, all these solvents having a hydrophilic index of more than 18.

Suitable hydrophilic alkoxylated aliphatic or aromatic alcohols to be used herein are according to the formula R-(A)n-R1-OH wherein R is a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated alkyl group, or alkyl substituted or non-alkyl substituted aryl group of from 1 to 20, preferably from 2 to 15 and more preferably from 2 to 10 carbon atoms, wherein A is an alkoxy group preferably a butoxy, propoxy and/or ethoxy group, and n is an integer of from 1 to 5, preferably 1 to 2. Particularly suitable alkoxylated alcohols to be used herein include methoxy propanol (HI = 37), ethoxy propanol (HI = 32), propoxy propanol (HI = 28) and/or butoxy propanol (HI = 27).

Suitable hydrophilic alkoxylated glycols to be used herein are according to the formula HO-CR1R2-OH wherein R1 and R2 are independently H or a C2-C10 saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon chain and/or cyclic hydrocarbon chain. Particularly suitable glycol to be used herein is propanediol (HI = 45).
from 2 to 10 carbon atoms, wherein $R_1$ is H or a linear saturated or unsaturated alkyl group of from 1 to 20, preferably from 2 to 15 and more preferably from 2 to 10 carbon atoms, and $A$ is an alkoxy group preferably an ethoxy, methoxy, and/or propoxy group and $n$ is from 1 to 5, preferably 1 to 2. A particularly suitable alkoxyated glycol to be used herein is ethoxyethoxyethanol (HI = 37).

Typically, the bleaching compositions according to the present invention may comprise up to 30%, preferably from 0.01% to 15%, more preferably from 0.1% to 10%, and most preferably from 0.5% to 5% by weight of the total composition of a solvent.

In a preferred embodiment wherein the compositions herein comprise a mixture of a hydrophobic solvent and a hydrophilic solvent the weight ratio of said hydrophobic solvent to said hydrophilic is from 1:20 to 1:1, more preferably from 1:14 to 1:2.

Solvents, when present, contribute to the excellent stain removal performance of the bleaching compositions as described herein.

**Foam reducing agent or system**

Typically, the bleaching compositions according to the present invention may further comprise a foam reducing agent or a foam reducing system. Any foam reducing agents known to those skilled in the art are suitable for use herein. In a preferred embodiment a foam reducing system comprising a fatty acid together with a capped alkoxylated nonionic surfactant as defined herein after and/or silicone is used.

Typically, the bleaching compositions herein may comprise from 1·$10^{-4}$% to 10%, preferably from 1·$10^{-3}$% to 5% and more preferably from 1·$10^{-2}$% to 5% by weight of the total composition of a fatty acid.

Typically, the bleaching compositions herein may comprise from 1·$10^{-3}$% to 20%, preferably from 1·$10^{-2}$% to 10% and more preferably from 5·$10^{-2}$% to 5% by weight of the total composition of a capped alkoxylated nonionic surfactant as defined herein.

Typically, the bleaching compositions herein may comprise from 1·$10^{-5}$% to 5%, preferably from 1·$10^{-4}$% to 1% and more preferably from 1·$10^{-4}$% to 0.5% by weight of the total composition of a silicone.

Suitable fatty acids for use herein are the alkali salts of a C8-C24 fatty acid. Such alkali salts include the metal fully saturated salts like sodium, potassium and/or lithium salts as well as the ammonium and/or alkylammonium salts of fatty acids, preferably the sodium salt. Preferred fatty acids for use herein contain from 8 to 22, preferably from 8 to 20 and more preferably from 8 to 18 carbon atoms.

Suitable fatty acids may be selected from caprylic acid, capric acid, lauric acid, myristic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, and mixtures of fatty acids suitably hardened, derived from natural sources such as plant or animal esters (e.g., palm oil, coconut oil, soybean oil, castor oil, tallow, ground oil, whale and fish oils and/or babassu oil.

For example Coconut Fatty Acid is commercially available from UNICHEMA under the name PRIFAC 5900®.

Suitable capped alkoxylated nonionic surfactants for use herein are according to the formula:

$$R_1(O-CH_2-CH_2)_n-(OR_2)_m-O-R_3$$

wherein $R_1$ is a C$_8$-C$_{24}$ linear or branched alkyl or alkenyl group, aryl group, alkaryl group, preferably $R_1$ is a C$_8$-C$_{18}$ alkyl or alkenyl group, more preferably a C$_{10}$-C$_{12}$ alkyl or alkenyl group, even more preferably a C$_{10}$-C$_{12}$ alkyl group; wherein $R_2$ is a C$_1$-C$_{10}$ linear or branched alkyl group, preferably a C$_2$-C$_{10}$ linear or branched alkyl group, preferably a C$_{10}$ group; wherein $R_3$ is a C$_{1}$-C$_{10}$ alkyl or alkenyl group, preferably a C$_{1}$-C$_{5}$ alkyl group, more preferably methyl; and wherein $n$ and $m$ are integers independently ranging in the range of from 1 to 20, preferably from 1 to 10, more preferably from 1 to 5; or mixtures thereof.

These surfactants are commercially available from BASF under the trade name Plurafac®, from HOECHST under the trade name Genapol® or from ICI under the trade name Symperonic®. Preferred capped nonionic alkoxylated surfactants of the above formula are those commercially available under the tradename Genapol® L 2.5 NR from Hoechst, and Plurafac® from BASF.

Suitable silicones for use herein include any silicone and silica-silicone mixtures. Silicones can be generally represented by alkylated polysiloxane materials while silica is normally used in finely divided forms exemplified by silica aerogels and xerogels and hydrophobic silicas of various types. These materials can be incorporated as particulates in which the silicone is advantageously releasably incorporated in a water-soluble or water-dispersible, substantially non-surface-active detergent impermeable carrier. Alternatively, the silicone can be dissolved or dispersed in a liquid carrier and applied by spraying on to one or more of the other components.

Actually in industrial practice, the term "silicone" has become a generic term, which encompasses a variety of relatively high-molecular-weight polymers containing siloxane units and hydrocarbyl groups of various types. Indeed,
Silicone compounds have been extensively described in the art, see for instance US 4 076 648, US 4 021 365, US 4 749 740, US 4 983 316, EP 150 872, EP 217 501 and EP 499 364. The silicone compounds disclosed therein are suitable in the context of the present invention. Generally, the silicone compounds can be described as siloxanes having the general structure:

\[
\text{R} \quad \mid \quad \text{(--SiO--)}_n \quad \mid \quad \text{R}
\]

wherein \( n \) is from 20 to 2000, and where each \( R \) independently can be an alkyl or an aryl radical. Examples of such substituents are methyl, ethyl, propyl, isobutyl, and phenyl. Preferred polyorganosiloxanes are polydimethylsiloxanes having trimethylsilyl end blocking units and having a viscosity at 25°C of from 5 \( \times \) 10⁻⁵ m²/s to 0.1 m²/s, i.e., a value of \( n \) in the range 40 to 1500. These are preferred because of their ready availability and their relatively low cost.

A preferred type of silicone compounds useful in the compositions herein comprises a mixture of an alkylated siloxane of the type herein above disclosed and solid silica.

The solid silica can be a fumed silica, a precipitated silica or a silica made by the gel formation technique. The silica particles can be rendered hydrophobic by treating them with diakylsilyl groups and/or trialkylsilane groups either bonded directly onto the silica or by means of silicone resin. A preferred silicone compound comprises a hydrophobic silanated, most preferably trimethylsilanated silica having a particle size in the range from 10 mm to 20 mm and a specific surface area above 50 m²/g. Silicone compounds employed in the compositions according to the present invention suitably have an amount of silica in the range of 1 to 30% (more preferably 2.0 to 15%) by weight of the total weight of the silicone compounds resulting in silicone compounds having an average viscosity in the range of from 2 \( \times \) 10⁻⁴m²/s to 1m²/s. Preferred silicone compounds may have a viscosity in the range of from 5 \( \times \) 10⁻³m²/s to 0.1m²/s.

Suitable silicone compounds for use herein are commercially available from various companies including Rhone Poulenc, Fueller and Dow Corning. Examples of silicone compounds for use herein are Silicone DB® 100 and Silicone Emulsion 2-3597® both commercially available from Dow Corning.

Another silicone compound is disclosed in Bartollota et al. U.S. Patent 3 933 672. Other particularly useful silicone compounds are the self-emulsifying silicone compounds, described in German Patent Application DTOS 2 646 126 published April 28, 1977. An example of such a compound is DC-544®, commercially available from Dow Corning, which is a siloxane-glycol copolymer.

Typically preferred silicone compounds are described in European Patent application EP-A-573699. Said compositions can comprise a silicone/silica mixture in combination with fumed nonporous silica such as Aerosil®.

Antioxidant

The bleaching compositions according to the present invention may further comprise an antioxidant. Typically, the bleaching compositions herein may comprise up to 10%, preferably from 0.002% to 5%, more preferably from 0.005% to 2%, and most preferably from 0.01% to 1% by weight of the total composition of an antioxidant.

Suitable antioxidants to be used herein include organic acids like citric acid, ascorbic acid, tartaric acid, adipic acid and sorbic acid, or amines like lecithin, or aminoacids like glutamine, methionine and cysteine, or esters like ascorbil palmitate, ascorbil stearate and triethylcitrate, or mixtures thereof. Preferred antioxidants for use herein are citric acid, ascorbic acid, ascorbil palmitate, lecithin or mixtures thereof.

Bleach activator

As an optional ingredient, the compositions of the present invention may comprise a bleach activator. By “bleach activator”, it is meant herein a compound, which reacts with hydrogen peroxide to form a peracid. The peracid thus formed constitutes the activated bleach. Suitable bleach activators to be used herein include those belonging to the class of esters, amides, imides, or anhydrides. Examples of suitable compounds of this type are disclosed in British Patent GB 1 586 769 and GB 2 143 231 and a method for their formation into a prilled form is described in European
Published Patent Application EP-A-62 523. Suitable examples of such compounds to be used herein are tetracetyl ethylene diamine (TAED), sodium 3,5,5 trimethyl hexanoyloxybenzene sulphonate, diperoxy dodecanoic acid as described for instance in US 4 818 425 and nonylamide of peroxyadipic acid as described for instance in US 4 259 201 and n-nonanoyloxybenzenesulphonate (NOBS). Also suitable are N-acyl caprolactams selected from the group consisting of substituted or unsubstituted benzoyl caprolactam, octanoyl caprolactam, nonanoyl caprolactam, hexanoyl capro lactam, de canoyl caprolactam, undecenoyl caprolactam, formyl caprolactam, acetyl caprolactam, propanoyl caprolactam, butanoyl caprolactam pentanoyl caprolactam or mixtures thereof. A particular family of bleach activators of interest was disclosed in EP 624 154, and particularly preferred in that family is acetyl triethyl citrate (ATC). Acetyl triethyl citrate has the advantage that it is environmental-friendly as it eventually degrades into citric acid and alcohol. Furthermore, acetyl triethyl citrate has a good hydrolytical stability in the product upon storage and it is an efficient bleach activator. Finally, it provides good building capacity to the composition.

The bleaching compositions according to the present invention may comprise from 0.01% to 20%, preferably from 1% to 10%, and more preferably from 3% to 7% by weight of the total composition of said bleach activator.

Sulphonated hydrotrope

The bleaching compositions according to the present invention may further comprise a sulphonated hydrotrope.

Any sulphonated hydrotropes known to those skilled in the art are suitable for use herein. In a preferred embodiment alkyl aryl sulphonates or alkyl aryl sulphonic acids are used. Preferred alkyl aryl sulphonates include sodium, potassium, calcium and ammonium xylene sulphonates, sodium, potassium, calcium and ammonium toluene sulphonates, sodium, potassium, calcium and ammonium cumene sulphonates, sodium, potassium, calcium and ammonium substituted or unsubstituted naphthalene sulphonates and mixtures thereof. Preferred alkyl aryl sulphonic acids include xylene sulphonic acid, toluenesulphonic acid, cumenesulphonic acid, substituted or unsubstituted naphthalenesulphonic acid and mixtures thereof. More preferably, xylene sulphonic acid or p-toluene sulphonate or mixtures thereof are used.

Typically, the bleaching compositions herein comprise from 0.01% to 20% by weight of the total composition of a sulphonated hydrotrope, preferably from 0.05% to 10% and more preferably from 0.1% to 5%.

Examples

The following examples will further illustrate the present invention. The compositions are made by combining the listed ingredients in the listed proportions (weight % unless otherwise specified). The following Examples are meant to exemplify compositions used in a process according to the present invention but are not necessarily used to limit or otherwise define the scope of the present invention.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compositions</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
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All examples have a pH of below 9

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Claims

1. A process of treating fabrics with a liquid bleaching composition comprising at least 3% of a peroxygen bleach and a dye maintenance agent, wherein said process comprises the steps of contacting said fabrics with said liquid composition in its neat or diluted form and washing said fabrics with an aqueous bath comprising water and a conventional laundry detergent, preferably comprising at least one surface active agent, before and/or during and/or after the step of contacting said fabrics with said liquid composition.

2. A process according to claim 1, wherein said peroxygen bleach is selected from the group consisting of: hydrogen peroxide; water soluble sources of hydrogen peroxide; organic or inorganic peracids; hydroperoxides; and diacyl peroxides; and mixtures thereof.

3. A process according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said bleaching composition as is has a pH, measured at 25°C, of no more than 9.

4. A process according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said bleaching composition comprises from 3% to 30% by weight of the total composition of said peroxygen bleach.

5. A process according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said dye maintenance agent is a cyclic amine based polymer, oligomer or copolymer.

6. A process according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said dye maintenance agent is a cyclic amine based nonionic surfactant commercially available from SHELL.

Dobanol® 23-3 is a C_{12}-C_{13} EO3 nonionic surfactant commercially available from SHELL.

Dobanol® 45-7 is a C_{14}-C_{15} EO7 nonionic surfactant commercially available from SHELL.

Dobanol® 91-8 is a C_{9}-C_{11} EO8 nonionic surfactant commercially available from SHELL.

Dobanol® 91-10 is a C_{9}-C_{11} EO10 nonionic surfactant commercially available from SHELL.

Marlipal® 24-4 is a linear C_{12}-C_{14} EO4 nonionic surfactant commercially available from Condea.

Marlipal® 24-7 is a linear C_{12}-C_{14} EO7 nonionic surfactant commercially available from Condea.

Hydrogen Peroxide is commercially available from Ausimont.

Dye maintenance agent is imidazole: epi-chlorohydrin copolymer commercially available under the trade name Sokalan PG-IME® from BASF.
polymer, oligomer or copolymer of the general formula:

\[
T \xrightarrow{W-R_2} W \xrightarrow{T} A_b
\]

wherein each T is independently selected from the group consisting of: H, C_{1-12} alkyl, substituted alkyl, C_7-C_{12} alkylaryl, -(CH_2)_nCOOM, -(CH_2)_nSO_3M, CH_2CH(OH)SO_3M, -(CH_2)_nOSO_3M, \(-R_2Q;\)

wherein W comprises at least one cyclic constituent selected from the group consisting of:

in addition to the at least one cyclic constituent, W may also comprise an aliphatic or substituted aliphatic moiety of the general structure;
- each B is independently C₁₋₁₂ alkylene, C₁₋₁₂ substituted alkylene, C₃₋₁₂ alkenylene, C₆₋₁₂ dialkylarylene, C₆₋₁₂ dialkylarylenediyl, and -(R₅O)ₙR₅⁻;
- each D is independently C₂⁻₆ alkylene;
- each Q is independently selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, C₁⁻₁₈ alkoxy, C₂⁻₁₈ hydroxy alkoxy, amino, C₁⁻₁₈ alkyl amino, dialkyl amino, trialkyl amino groups, heterocyclic monoamino groups and diamine groups;
- each R₁ is independently selected from the group consisting of H, C₁⁻₈ alkyl and C₁⁻₈ hydroxyalkyl;
- each R₂ is independently selected from the group consisting of : C₁⁻₁₂ alkylene, C₁⁻₁₂ alkenylene, -CH₂-CH(OR₁)-CH₂, C₈⁻₁₂ alkarylene, C₄⁻₁₂ dihydroxy alkylene, poly(C₂⁻₄ alkenyleneoxy) alkylene, H₂CH(OH)CH₂OR₂OCH₂CH(OH)CH₂⁻, and C₃⁻₁₂ hydrocarbyl moieties;
  provided that when R₂ is a C₃⁻₁₂ hydrocarbyl moiety the hydrocarbyl moiety can comprise from about 2 to about 4 branching moieties of the general structure:

- each R₃ is independently selected from the group consisting of: H, R₂, O, C₁⁻₂₀ hydroxyalkyl, C₁⁻₂₀ alkyl, substituted alkyl, C₆⁻₁₁ aryl, substituted aryl, C₇⁻₁₁ alkaryl, C₁⁻₂₀ aminoalkyl, -(CH₂)ₙCOOM, -(CH₂)ₙSO₃M, CH₂CH(OH)SO₃M, -(CH₂)ₙOSO₃M,

and

- wherein at least 10 mole% of the R₃ groups are O, provided that O is only present on a tertiary N;
- each R₄ is independently selected from the group consisting of : H, C₁⁻₂₂ alkyl, C₁⁻₂₂ hydroxyalkyl, aryl and C₇⁻₂₂ alkylaryl;
27.

- each $R_2$ is independently selected from the group consisting of: $C_2-C_8$ alkylene, $C_2-C_8$ alkyl substituted alkylene; and

A is a compatible monovalent or di or polyvalent anion;
M is a compatible cation;
and wherein $b =$ number necessary to balance the charge; each $x$ is independently from 3 to 1000; each $c$ is independently 0 or 1; each $h$ is independently from 1 to 8; each $q$ is independently from 0 to 6; each $n$ is independently from 1 to 20; each $r$ is independently from 0 to 20; and each $t$ is independently from 0 to 1.

7. A process according to claim 6, wherein each $R_1$ is H and at least one $W$ is selected from the group consisting of:

$\begin{array}{c}
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R}_3 \\
\end{array}$

$\begin{array}{c}
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R}_3 \\
\end{array}$

$\begin{array}{c}
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R}_3 \\
\end{array}$

$\begin{array}{c}
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R}_3 \\
\end{array}$

8. A process according to any of claims 6 to 7, wherein $R_1$ is H and at least one $W$ is selected from the group consisting of:

$\begin{array}{c}
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R}_3 \\
\end{array}$

$\begin{array}{c}
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R}_3 \\
\end{array}$

$\begin{array}{c}
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R}_3 \\
\end{array}$

$\begin{array}{c}
\text{N} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{R}_3 \\
\end{array}$

and
9. A process according to any of claims 6 to 8, wherein each R₁ is H and at least one W is selected from the group consisting of:

10. A process according to any of claims 5 to 9, wherein said cyclic amine based polymers, oligomers or copolymers are oxidized adducts selected from the group consisting of piperazine, piperidine, epichlorohydrin, epichlorohydrin benzyl quat, epichlorohydrin methyl quat, morpholine and mixtures thereof.

11. A process according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said bleaching composition comprises from 0.001% to 30% by weight of the total composition of said dye maintenance agent.

12. An article of manufacture comprising: a container; a set of instructions; and a liquid bleaching composition comprising at least 3% of a peroxygen bleach and a dye maintenance agent; wherein said set of instructions comprises instructions of treating fabrics in a process comprising the steps of contacting said fabrics with said liquid bleaching composition in its neat or diluted form and washing said fabrics with an aqueous bath comprising water and a conventional laundry detergent, preferably comprising at least one surface active agent, before and/or during and/or after the step of contacting said fabrics with said liquid composition.

13. An article of manufacture according to claim 12, wherein said liquid bleaching composition comprising at least 3% of a peroxygen bleach and a dye maintenance agent is the liquid bleaching composition used in the process according to any of claims 1 to 11.
## DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims.

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