



## SAF™

# General Handling Guidance Notes

### Moisture Content

The moisture content of SAF™ is important for successful processing. A moisture level of about 10% is ideal for short staple products. Once unpacked the moisture content of SAF™ is affected by environmental conditions. Successful processing of SAF™ is aided by careful storage and handling procedures which maintain the fibre at the correct moisture content.

A symptom of low moisture level is increased fibre brittleness and friability. Symptoms of high moisture level are increased fibre cohesion accompanied by a reduction in tenacity and increase in extensibility. In the worst cases clumps of tightly bound fibres can form which will turn into hard lumps if subsequently dried.

In many cases, no problems will be experienced beyond those adjustments expected from adapting to processing a new type of fibre. If environmental conditions are not ideal, processing may still be successful if processing time is short. If in doubt, a simple test can be made by leaving a small hand blended sample containing SAF™ open in the processing room for the time the fibre is likely to be exposed. If conditions are unsuitable there will be a discernible difference in the "handle" of the fibre sample.

### Storage and Transport

SAF™ should be stored in its original packaging. As supplied, SAF™ is baled a polythene (LDPE) liner. The sealed polythene liner must not be damaged if SAF™ is to be stored successfully.

Bales should not be opened until required for processing. If it is necessary to open the contents of a bale, then the polythene liner must be resealed. Bales should not be placed in a damp or wet environment.

### Manual Handling

SAF™ is a highly absorbent fibre and will tend to extract moisture both from the atmosphere and from any surface it comes into contact with. In some cases, prolonged skin contact may produce discomfort. Such discomfort arises as a result of an individual's sensitivity to being in contact with the SAF™. Some individuals see no discomfort whatsoever, whereas more sensitive individuals have reported incidences of mild skin irritation and rashes following contact with SAF™.

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Some discomfort is as a result of skin dehydration by the SAF™ combined with the cross sectional dimensions effect (rod like) of the SAF™ causing some abrasive irritation.

If an individual is affected, we recommend the taking of suitable precautions. Wear suitable clothing while handling fibre. Where contaminated clothing is in contact with the skin, then it should be removed after processing SAF™ is completed. Wash contaminated areas of skin with soap and water. In typical processing operations hands, wrists and arms are most susceptible. Some benefit has been found through the use of protective skin barrier creams, prior to contact with SAF™.

## Processing

SAF™ fibres can be damaged by aggressive opening.

After blending, process immediately. If this is not practicable, then the blend should be stored in sealed polythene bags or containers to prevent a change in fibre moisture.

If the blend is to be stored then, the moisture content of the SAF™ components is also important. Avoid baling the blend.

Processing conditions should be chosen to suit the majority fibre.

In some cases, conditions may need to be adjusted to avoid damage to the SAF™ and resulting waste.

Relative Humidity in the processing area should be kept to 40-60%.

Contact with water droplets must be avoided. Possible sources include air conditioning systems and condensation from hot humid air on cold surfaces including the surfaces of processing machinery.

Exact processing conditions are very dependent on the machinery, fibre blend and final product form.

It is advisable to clean machinery after processing.

Loose fibre can be removed by hand (*note Handling guidance*) or using a vacuum cleaner.