

adhere academy: pot life v shelf life v working life - part 1



We get a lot of questions about **pot life** and the terminology

around it, so we'd like to provide some clarification. Nobody could be blamed for thinking that **pot life** describes how long the adhesive (or sealant, coating, potting compound or gasketing material) can remain useful in the pot they buy it in. And isn't that the same as **shelf life**? And what about **working life**?

What is shelf life?

Shelf life – what it says on the tin, literally. **Shelf life** is the length of time from the date of manufacture (or packaging) during which the material will be under warranty to behave according to the technical data sheet, assuming the storage conditions have been met. It often manifests itself on the product label, which may either state an **expiry date** (the date when the **shelf life** runs out) or a **manufactured date** (in which case you have to find out the **shelf life** from a data sheet to calculate the **expiry date**).

Mark Price, managing director of Waitrose, recently admitted in the press to often eating fruit, vegetables, cheese, meat as well as sausages and bacon a few days after the use-by date. And just like those foods, the adhesives and materials you buy are not going to become completely unusable at the stroke of midnight on the **expiry date**.

Nevertheless, material suppliers have to draw a line in the sand somewhere – with the benefit of expert formulation knowledge and extensive life testing, we know how long we can *safely guarantee*

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the products. After the **expiry date**, the materials can be used, but at the complete risk of the user. Most industrial businesses will prefer not to take that risk; they weigh up the cost of the material against the potential loss of reputation by making poor quality products.

We help our customers by making sure we have very strict stock rotation in our warehouse, on a rigid FIFO basis, and with optimal storage conditions. We balance the needs of having stock for next day delivery against the loss of **shelf life** whilst sitting on our shelves. We deliver with as much remaining **shelf life** as we can.

In [part 2](#), we'll look at **working life** and **pot life**.



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