

Introduction

Sherardizing is a thermal diffusion coating process in which ferrous articles are heated in the presence of a sherardizing mixture consisting of zinc dust with or without an inert material.

The process is commonly performed in closed, slowly rotating or fixed containers at temperatures ranging from around 300 °C to 500 °C. The normal processing temperature is below the melting point of zinc (419 °C).

During the process, zinc reacts with the surface to form inter-metallic layers on ferrous articles.

A coating thickness of 10 µm to 75 µm (and higher if required) can be achieved. The coating thickness is accurately controlled by the amount of zinc dust, processing time and temperature. The coating closely follows the contours of the base material and uniform coating thicknesses are produced on articles, including those of irregular shape.

After sherardizing, the container load is cooled down. A screening process separates the sherardized articles from the unused sherardizing mixture. The articles, with the zinc-iron inter-metallic layers, are eventually post-treated (by phosphating, chromating or another suitable passivation process) resulting in a clean and passivated surface.

It is common to use articles coated with zinc-iron inter-metallic layers as a primer or base-coat for duplex-systems.

Sherardizing (thermal diffusion coating) is also known as the following:

- diffusion zinc plating (Germany);
- thermal diffusion coating (Russia);
- thermal diffusion galvanizing (Ukraine);
- vapour galvanizing (UK);
- zinc diffusion coating (USA);
- zinc inter-metallic coating (Russia);
- zinc thermo diffusion galvanizing (Israel).

In China, Europe and the USA, the common name for the thermal diffusion coating process is sherardizing.