How 4,4′-Oxydianiline Is Used in Heat-Resistant Polyimide Materials

Shanghai, China Aug 26, 2026 (Issuewire.com**)** - 4,4′-Oxydianiline, commonly abbreviated as 4,4′-ODA or ODA, is an aromatic diamine identified by CAS 101-80-4. Its technical importance in high-performance polymer chemistry comes primarily from its role as a structural monomer in polyimide and related polymer systems. Starsky Chemical lists its 4,4′-ODA as a white solid with a molecular formula of $C_{12}H_{12}N_2O$, a molecular weight of 200.24 g/mol, and a melting point of 188–192°C. The company's product information specifically associates 4,4′-ODA with high-temperature polyimide films, resins, engineering plastics and several related polymer families. The relationship between ODA and heat-resistant polyimides should not be reduced to a statement that ODA itself is simply “heat resistant.” Its importance comes from the molecular structure that becomes part of the finished polymer backbone. The two aromatic rings provide a relatively rigid structural framework. The two primary amino groups allow ODA to function as the diamine component of a polyimide monomer system. The ether linkage between the aromatic rings introduces a degree of conformational freedom. A finished polyimide remains a complete molecular system. Its thermal, mechanical, dimensional and electrical behavior depends on the diamine, the dianhydride, molecular architecture, morphology and processing history. Research using 4,4′-ODA with different dianhydrides confirms that changing other components of the polymer system can produce significantly different material behavior.

Why Is 4,4′-ODA Used in Polyimide Materials?

4,4′-ODA belongs to the aromatic diamine family. Its molecule contains two primary amino groups attached to aromatic structures. These amino groups allow the molecule to serve as the diamine component when constructing a polyimide backbone. This role is different from that of a conventional polymer additive. An additive may modify selected characteristics without becoming a regular structural unit of the main polymer chain. A diamine monomer such as 4,4′-ODA contributes directly to the repeating molecular architecture of the polymer. The aromatic portion of the molecule is equally important. Aromatic structural units are commonly used in high-performance polyimide chemistry because their comparatively restricted molecular motion can contribute to rigid polymer backbones and favorable thermal behavior. ODA also contains a central Ar–O–Ar ether linkage. This linkage introduces more conformational freedom than would normally be expected from an entirely rigid, directly connected aromatic structure. 4,4′-ODA therefore combines two molecular characteristics that matter in polymer design:

aromatic backbone rigidity and ether-linked molecular mobility.

Neither characteristic should be evaluated independently. Their technical significance depends on how the ODA unit interacts with the rest of the polymer structure.

How 4,4′-ODA Becomes Part of a Polyimide Backbone

Polyimide molecular architecture is controlled by both sides of the monomer system. 4,4′-ODA provides the diamine-derived structural unit, while a dianhydride provides the complementary part of the polymer backbone. Changing the dianhydride changes the finished polymer even when the same 4,4′-ODA diamine is used. A 2025 study provides a useful example. Researchers kept 4,4′-ODA as the diamine while varying the dianhydride structure among PMDA, an oxydiphthalic dianhydride system, and another aromatic dianhydride. The resulting polyimides showed different thermophysical, mechanical, and electrical characteristics. The study also found that film-forming conditions affected the measured properties. The basic material-design relationship can be expressed as:

4,4′-ODA structure + dianhydride structure → polyimide backbone architecture → finished material properties

This distinction is important for technical users. Two polymers can both be described as ODA-based polyimides while exhibiting different thermal transitions, dielectric characteristics, dimensional behavior, or processability because their complete molecular architectures are different. ODA is therefore an important building block, not a standalone predictor of polyimide performance.

Why the Molecular Structure of 4,4′-ODA Matters: Aromatic Rings and Backbone Rigidity

4,4′-ODA contains two benzene rings. When the monomer becomes incorporated into a polyimide chain, these aromatic units form part of the polymer backbone. Aromatic structures are widely used in high-performance polymer design because they provide a relatively rigid molecular framework compared with many flexible aliphatic structures. Backbone rigidity is relevant to heat-resistant polymer design because highly flexible chain segments generally have greater freedom of molecular motion. A more rigid aromatic backbone can restrict that motion. This does not mean that the presence of ODA alone establishes a specific service temperature. Thermal performance is a property of the finished polymer. It must be evaluated using the actual polyimide formulation and appropriate material-level testing.

Ether Linkage and Chain Mobility

The two aromatic rings in 4,4′-ODA are connected through an ether oxygen. This Ar–O–Ar structure changes the conformational behavior of the molecule. Compared with a fully rigid aromatic structure, the ether linkage allows additional rotational freedom between the phenyl groups. When incorporated into a polymer backbone, this structural feature can affect molecular mobility, chain packing, and processing behavior. Polyimide design frequently requires a balance. A highly rigid polymer architecture may support certain thermal or dimensional requirements but can create different processing characteristics. Increasing molecular flexibility may improve some processing-related properties while changing other performance parameters. The technical value of ODA lies partly in providing an aromatic diamine structure that combines rigidity with an ether-linked degree of mobility.

Para/Para Molecular Geometry

4,4′-ODA has a para/para amino-group arrangement. Both amino groups are positioned in para relationships relative to the ether linkage on their respective aromatic rings. This produces a more symmetric molecular geometry than 3,4′-ODA, another oxydianiline isomer listed within Starsky Chemical’s related product range. Substitution position matters because molecular geometry influences the way structural units are incorporated into a polymer chain. Symmetry, chain geometry, molecular orientation, and packing can all influence finished polymer behavior. These effects depend on the associated dianhydride and complete polymer structure, so the para/para arrangement should be treated as a structural variable rather than a guarantee of superior performance.

4,4′-ODA in Heat-Resistant Polyimide Films

High-temperature polyimide film is one of the application areas explicitly listed by Starsky Chemical for its 4,4′-ODA product. Polyimide films are a useful example of why monomer structure must be distinguished from finished-material performance. ODA becomes part of the polymer chain. The film is then evaluated as a complete polymeric material rather than according to the physical properties of the original ODA monomer. Typical performance considerations for polyimide films can include thermal transitions, thermal stability, dimensional behavior, mechanical properties, dielectric characteristics, and molecular orientation. The relative importance of each parameter depends on the intended film application. PMDA–ODA is a widely studied aromatic polyimide system and is frequently used as a reference material in research involving electrical-insulation films. Recent research comparing PMDA–ODA with other ODA-containing polyimides also demonstrates that changing the dianhydride and film-forming conditions changes measurable material properties. The term “ODA-based polyimide film” therefore identifies only part of the material chemistry. It does not define a single thermal rating, dielectric constant, coefficient of thermal expansion, or mechanical-strength value.

Examples of ODA-Based Polyimide Systems: PMDA–ODA

PMDA–ODA combines 4,4′-Oxydianiline with pyromellitic dianhydride. It is one of the established aromatic polyimide systems used as a reference in research involving high-temperature and electrically insulating films. Its relevance demonstrates that 4,4′-ODA can form part of a highly aromatic polyimide backbone designed for demanding film applications. The properties of PMDA–ODA should still be attributed to the entire PMDA–ODA polymer structure rather than to the ODA monomer alone.

ODPA–ODA

ODA can also be combined with an aromatic ether-containing dianhydride. Starsky Chemical's own product portfolio includes both 4,4′-ODA and ODPA-related polyimide monomers, creating a technically relevant connection between the products within the company's content structure. Research comparing ODPA–ODA-type polymers with other ODA-based systems illustrates an important principle: when ODA remains constant but the dianhydride changes, the backbone architecture and finished polymer behavior also change. This is why engineers evaluate monomer pairs, not only individual monomers.

Other Aromatic Dianhydride Systems

4,4′-ODA has been studied with multiple aromatic dianhydride structures. Different dianhydrides introduce different levels of molecular rigidity, ether functionality, symmetry, and steric structure into the polymer backbone. No single dianhydride should be described as universally superior. The appropriate combination depends on the balance of thermal, mechanical, electrical, dimensional and processing properties required from the finished polyimide.

What Determines the Heat Resistance of an ODA-Based Polyimide?

Heat resistance is a system property rather than a single-monomer property. Several variables work together:

- Dianhydride structure: changing the dianhydride changes polymer-chain geometry even when 4,4′-ODA remains the diamine.
- Overall backbone rigidity: the type and position of aromatic rings, ether linkages and other structural units influence molecular mobility.
- Molecular structure and molecular weight: polymer-chain characteristics affect the behavior of the finished material.
- Morphology and molecular orientation: these factors can become especially important in films and fibers.
- Processing history: film-forming and thermal-processing conditions can influence the final polymer structure and measured properties.

A 2025 study of ODA-based polyimides found that both chemical structure and processing variables influenced thermomechanical and electrical characteristics. This has a practical implication for B2B material evaluation. The presence of 4,4′-ODA confirms one important structural component of the polymer. It does not establish one universal maximum operating temperature for all ODA-containing polyimides.

Where Are Heat-Resistant ODA-Based Polyimides Relevant?

Electrical and electronic materials are one important application area for aromatic polyimides. Polyimide films and coatings are widely used and studied where electrical insulation must be combined with thermal and dimensional performance. Research literature specifically identifies ODA-containing polyimide films in electrical and electronics contexts. Film-based material systems are particularly relevant to Starsky Chemical because the company explicitly lists high-temperature polyimide film among the applications of its 4,4′-ODA product. The same product page also associates ODA with polyimide resins, engineering plastics, and related high-temperature polymer materials. These application descriptions should not be interpreted as automatic qualification for a particular component or operating condition. Final application suitability must be established using data from the finished polymer, film, resin or component.

Why Raw-Material Consistency Matters

High-performance polymer development starts with correct monomer identification. Starsky Chemical identifies its product as 4,4′-Oxydianiline, CAS 101-80-4, with molecular formula $C_{12}H_{12}N_2O$ and molecular weight 200.24 g/mol. The current product information describes the material as a white solid and reports a melting point of 188–192°C. Exact isomer identification matters. 4,4′-ODA and 3,4′-ODA have the same molecular formula but different amino-group positions and different CAS numbers. Different molecular geometries can contribute differently to polymer-chain architecture. For repeated polymer development, purity, impurity profile, isomer identity, and batch consistency can all affect material qualification and reproducibility. Technical users should evaluate these factors against their own validated raw-material specifications and the analytical documentation associated with the actual production batch.

4,4′-ODA vs Other Aromatic Diamines

Aromatic diamines vary in substitution position, molecular symmetry, linkage structure and overall rigidity. 4,4′-ODA is characterized by two aromatic rings, a central ether linkage and a para/para amino-group arrangement. Changing any of these structural features creates a different diamine and introduces a different geometry into the polymer backbone. The technically useful comparison is therefore not simply which diamine is “more heat resistant.” A better question is how each diamine contributes to the balance of rigidity, molecular mobility, processing characteristics, and final polymer performance required for a defined application.

Safety and Regulatory Considerations

4,4′-Oxydianiline requires careful occupational-health and regulatory consideration. The U.S. National Toxicology Program lists 4,4′-Oxydianiline, CAS 101-80-4, as reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen, based on sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity from animal studies. Its technical value in high-performance polymer chemistry does not reduce the importance of chemical-risk management. Organizations working with the material should rely on the current Safety Data Sheet, applicable regulations, and internal EHS requirements when assessing workplace exposure and handling controls. A technical application article cannot replace an SDS or a formal occupational-risk assessment.

FAQ: Why is 4,4′-ODA used in polyimide materials?

4,4′-ODA is an aromatic diamine monomer. Its amino groups allow it to contribute to the polyimide backbone, while its aromatic rings and ether linkage introduce a specific combination of molecular rigidity and mobility.

Is 4,4′-ODA a polyimide monomer?

Yes. In polyimide chemistry, 4,4′-ODA functions as the diamine component of a diamine–dianhydride monomer system.

Does 4,4′-ODA determine the heat resistance of a polyimide?

No. The finished thermal performance depends on the complete polymer architecture, including the dianhydride structure, molecular characteristics, morphology, and processing history. Research comparing ODA-based polyimides with different dianhydrides supports this system-level relationship.

Can 4,4′-ODA be used with different dianhydrides?

Yes. Research includes ODA-containing polyimides based on different aromatic dianhydrides, including PMDA and oxydiphthalic dianhydride systems. Changing the dianhydride changes the resulting polymer architecture.

Why does the ether linkage in 4,4′-ODA matter?

The ether linkage provides rotational freedom between the aromatic rings. This affects the conformation of the ODA-derived structural unit and contributes to the balance between backbone rigidity and molecular mobility.

Is 4,4′-ODA the same as 3,4′-ODA?

No. They are positional isomers with different amino-group arrangements and different CAS numbers. Their molecular geometries are therefore different.

Conclusion

4,4′-Oxydianiline is relevant to heat-resistant polyimide materials because it functions as an aromatic diamine building block that becomes part of the polymer backbone. Its para/para aromatic structure contributes molecular rigidity, while the central ether linkage introduces a degree of conformational freedom. Starsky Chemical positions its 4,4′-ODA, CAS 101-80-4, for high-temperature polyimide films, resins, engineering plastics, and related polymer materials, which is consistent with the established technical role of ODA in aromatic polyimide chemistry. The performance of an ODA-based polyimide must still be evaluated as a complete material system. Dianhydride selection, polymer architecture, morphology, and processing conditions can all affect thermal, mechanical, dimensional, and electrical behavior. Research using ODA as a constant diamine while changing other variables demonstrates this relationship directly. For engineers and material developers, the most useful question is not whether 4,4′-ODA is “heat resistant” by itself. The relevant question is how the ODA-derived structural unit contributes to the performance of a defined polyimide system.

Media Contact

Shanghai Starsky New Material Co., Ltd.

*********@starskychemical.com

+86 13162192651

http://starskychemical.com

Source : Shanghai Starsky New Material Co., Ltd.

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