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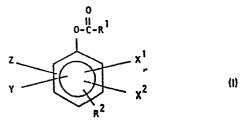
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(54) Phenylene mono- and diester peracid percursors.

(57) The invention provides novel peracid precursors representative of which is the structure:



wherein R1 is alkyl of 1 to 20 carbon atoms; R2 is OH, -O-R3,

and X^1 , X^2 , Y and Z are individually selected from H, SO_3 , CO_2 , NO₂, NR₄, halogen, R⁶ and mixtures thereof:

wherein R3 of -O-R3 is alkyl of 1 to 20 carbon atoms; R4

is alkyl of 1 to 20 carbon atoms; R5 of NR45 is selected from H, alkyl of 1 to 24 carbon atoms and mixtures thereof; and R⁶ is alkyl of 1 to 20 carbon atoms.

In one embodiment of the invention, the novel peracid precursors are combined with a source of hydrogen peroxide and sufficient quantities of buffer to impart an alkaline pH when the composition is placed in aqueous solution. Preferred embodiments of the invention include wherein R2 is hydroxy, and R1 is alkyl of 1 to 20 carbon atoms (monoester);

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 and wherein R^2 is $-O-C-R^4$,

and R¹ and R⁴ are alkyls of 1 to 20 carbon atoms (diester) and may be either symmetrical (i.e., $R^1 \neq R^4$) or mixed (i.e., $R^1 =$ R⁴). The mixed diester embodiment appears to provide benefits of mixed hydrophobic-hydrophilic peracid generation to oxidize both hydrophobic and hydrophilic soils. Various detergent adjuncts known to those skilled in the art may be added, such as surfactants, builders, fragrances, antimicrobial compounds and the like.

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