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[54] **PROCESS FOR REDUCING THE FLUORINE CONTENT OF HYDROFLUOROCARBONS AND HYDROHALOFLUOROCARBONS**

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[*] Notice: The term of this patent shall not extend beyond the expiration date of Pat. No. 5,345,017.

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Related U.S. Application Data

[63] Continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 987,529, Dec. 8, 1992, abandoned.

[51] Int. Cl.⁶ **C07C 17/25**

[52] U.S. Cl. **570/156; 570/170; 570/176**

[58] Field of Search **570/166, 168, 570/156, 170, 176**

[56] References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

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FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

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Primary Examiner—Alan Siegel

[57] ABSTRACT

The fluorine content of an acyclic saturated compound of the formula $C_nF_aX_bH_c$ (wherein each X is independently selected from the group consisting of Cl and Br, and wherein n is 1 to 6, a is 1 to 13, b is 0 to 12, c is 1 to 9, and a+b+c equals 2n+2) is reduced by reacting the acyclic saturated compound with HCl in the vapor phase at an elevated temperature in the presence of a catalyst, the mole ratio of HCl to the acyclic saturated compound being at least about 1:1.

12 Claims, No Drawings

**PROCESS FOR REDUCING THE FLUORINE
CONTENT OF HYDROFLUOROCARBONS
AND HYDROHALOFLUOROCARBONS**

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 07/987,529 filed Dec. 8, 1992 now abandoned.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to halogen-substituted hydrocarbons containing fluorine, and more particularly, to a process for reducing the fluorine content of hydrofluorocarbons and hydrohalofluorocarbons.

BACKGROUND

Hydrofluorocarbons (i.e., compounds containing only the elements carbon, fluorine, and hydrogen) and hydrohalofluorocarbons (i.e., compounds containing only the elements carbon, fluorine, hydrogen and chlorine and/or bromine) are widely used as refrigerants, aerosol propellants, blowing agents, cleaning agents, fire extinguishants and chemical intermediates. Commercially, many of such compounds are prepared by the reactions of hydrogen fluoride with olefins or saturated compounds containing chlorine. Some compounds (e.g., various hydrofluorocarbons) can be prepared by the hydrogenolysis of an appropriate chlorine and/or bromine-containing precursor. These processes can also produce halogenated hydrocarbons having a lesser commercial value and/or not having the desired properties. Furthermore, the supply/demand situation for any particular product can vary and there may be an oversupply of a particular hydrofluorocarbon or hydrohalofluorocarbon. For environmental reasons, it may not be advantageous to dispose of surplus or by-products by such methods as incineration, but rather to further react these materials to increase the yields of useful products. A reduction of the fluorine content of various hydrofluorocarbons and hydrochlorofluorocarbons can improve their value as commercial products and/or as precursors for producing other useful products.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention provides a method for reducing the fluorine content of an acyclic saturated compound of the formula $C_nF_aX_bH_c$ wherein each X is independently selected from the group consisting of Cl and Br, and wherein n is 1 to 6, a is 1 to 13, b is 0 to 12, c is 1 to 9, and a+b+c equals 2n+2. The method comprises the step of reacting the acyclic saturated compound with HCl in the vapor phase at an elevated temperature in the presence of a catalyst, the mole ratio of HCl to the acyclic saturated compound being at least about 1:1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present invention provides a process for reducing the fluorine content of an acyclic saturated compound of the formula $C_nF_aX_bH_c$ wherein each X is independently selected from Cl and Br, and wherein n is 1 to 6, a is 1 to 13, b is 0 to 12, c is 1 to 9, and a+b+c equals 2n+2, by reacting the acyclic saturated compound with HCl in the vapor phase in the presence of a catalyst. Of particular note are embodiments of the invention where n is 1, embodiments of the invention where n is 2, and embodiments of the invention where n is 3. Where n is 2 or more, the reaction products having reduced fluorine content may include saturated and/

or olefinic compounds. For example, CH_3CF_3 may be reacted to produce saturated compounds (e.g., CH_3CCl_2F and CH_3CCl_2Br) and unsaturated compounds (e.g., $CH_2=CF_2$, $CH_2=CClF$ and $CH_2=CCl_2$).

Included in this invention is the reaction of an acyclic saturated compound of the formula $C_nF_aX_bH_c$ wherein n is at least 2, c is at least 2 and the mole ratio of HCl to the compound is at least about 5:1 to produce a hydrogen-containing olefinic product. Also included is the reaction of an acyclic saturated compound of the formula $C_nF_aX_bH_c$ wherein n is 2, c is 1 and the mole ratio of HCl to the compound is at least about 5:1 to produce a perhalogenated olefinic product. For example, CF_3CF_2H may be reacted with HCl (preferably in a molar ratio of HCl:CF₃CF₂H of at least about 6:1) in the presence of a catalyst (e.g., an aluminum fluoride catalyst) to produce $CCl_2=CCl_2$ as the major halogenated hydrocarbon reaction product. Also included is the reaction of an acyclic saturated compound of the formula $C_nF_aX_bH_c$ where n is at least 2 (e.g., n is 2 or n is 3) and the mole ratio of HCl to the compound is about 5:1 or less (e.g., from 2:1 to 5:1) at an elevated temperature less than about 350° C. (e.g., 250° C. to 325° C.) to produce compounds of reduced fluorine content which are primarily (i.e., more than 50 mole percent) saturated compounds. Other embodiments involve the reaction of an acyclic saturated compound of the formula $CF_aX_bH_c$ wherein b is 0 to 2.

The invention includes reactions of HCl with mixtures of compounds of the formula $C_nF_aX_bH_c$ with each other and/or with other organic compounds such as ethers (e.g., dimethylether), alcohols (e.g., methanol) and hydrocarbons (e.g., propane and/or cyclohexane). In some embodiments, the mixtures are azeotropic. Examples of acyclic saturated compounds which may be reacted with HCl in accordance with this invention include CH_2FCF_3 , CHF_3 , CHF_2CF_3 , CH_3CF_3 , CH_3CHF_2 , $CHCl_2F$, $CHClF_2$, $CHCl_2CF_3$, $CHClFCF_3$, CH_2ClCF_3 , CH_3CF_2Cl , $CHBrF_2$ and CF_3CHBrF .

Chlorine may be present in some process embodiments, either as an initial reactant or as an in-situ formed product. Of note are reactions wherein Cl_2 is present during the reaction and a perhalogenated product is produced.

Suitable catalysts which can be used for reducing the fluorine content of the starting materials by reaction with HCl include vapor phase fluorination catalysts. Catalysts which may be used in accordance with this invention include metals (including elemental metals, metal oxides and/or other metal salts); alumina; fluorided alumina; aluminum fluoride; metals on alumina; metals on aluminum fluoride; magnesium fluoride on aluminum fluoride; metals on fluorided alumina; alumina on carbon; aluminum fluoride on carbon; fluorided alumina on carbon; metals on carbon; chromium catalysts (e.g., Cr_2O_3 by itself or with other metals such as Mg and/or Zn); mixtures of metals, aluminum fluoride, and graphite; and chromium-magnesium optionally on graphite. Suitable metals for use as catalysts (optionally on alumina, aluminum fluoride, fluorided alumina or carbon) include chromium, Group VIII metals (iron, cobalt, nickel, ruthenium, rhodium, palladium, osmium, iridium, platinum), Group VIIB metals (manganese, rhenium), Group IIIB metals (scandium, yttrium, lanthanum), Group IB metals (copper, silver, gold), zinc and/or metals having an atomic number of 58 through 71 (cerium, praseodymium, neodymium, promethium, samarium, europium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, holmium, erbium, thulium, ytterbium or lutetium). Preferably, when used with a support, the total metal content of the catalyst will be from about 0.1 to 20 percent by weight; typically, from about 0.1 to 10 percent by weight.

Fluorided alumina and aluminum fluoride can be prepared as described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,902,838. Metals on aluminum fluoride and metals on fluorided alumina can be prepared by procedures described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,766,260. Catalysts comprising chromium are well known in the art (see e.g., U.S. Pat. No. 5,036,036). Chromium supported on alumina can be prepared as described in U.S. Pat. No. 3,541,165. Chromium supported on carbon can be prepared as described in U.S. Pat. No. 3,632,834. Catalysts comprising chromium and magnesium may be prepared as described in Canadian Patent No. 2,025,145. Other metals and magnesium optionally on graphite can be prepared in a similar manner to the latter patent. Preferred catalysts include catalysts comprising aluminum fluoride and catalysts comprising chromium oxide.

Weak catalysts for this reaction such as silicon carbide may also be used.

The reaction of the acyclic saturated compound of the formula $C_nF_aX_bH_c$ with HCl in the presence of the catalysts of the instant invention is suitably conducted at a temperature within the range of from about 250° C. to 450° C., preferably from about 300° C. to 400° C., and most preferably from about 325° C. to about 375° C. The contact time is typically from about 1 to about 120 seconds, preferably from about 5 to about 60 seconds.

The amount of HCl should be at least a stoichiometric amount. Generally, the molar ratio of HCl to the acyclic saturated compound can range from about 1:1 to about 100:1, preferably about 3:1 to 50:1, and more preferably about 5:1 to 20:1.

In general, with a given catalyst composition, the higher the temperature and the longer the contact time, the greater is the conversion of fluorinated products and the greater is the production of polychlorinated products. The above variables can be balanced, one against the other, so that the formation of lower fluorine substituted products is maximized.

The reaction products may normally be separated by conventional techniques, such as distillation. Some of the reaction products will have desired properties for commercial use by themselves, or as intermediates for making other commercial products. Others, such as $CHCl=CCl_2$, $CCl_2=CCl_2$, $CHCl_3$, etc. can be recycled back to reactors which are being used for the synthesis of hydrofluorocarbons and hydrohalofluorocarbons. For example, vapor-phase processes for manufacturing CF_3CHCl_2 and/or CF_3CHFCl by hydrofluorination of $CCl_2=CCl_2$ often produce substantial amounts of CF_3CF_2H by-product; and the process of this invention may be used to obtain $CCl_2=CCl_2$ (and HF) for use as starting materials for the hydrofluorination. The process of this invention provides a method of utilizing substantially all of a halogenated hydrocarbon plant's products. This utility has the benefit of providing a manufacturing facility with minimum waste, and therefore, minimum environmental impact.

The reaction of the acyclic saturated compound with HCl may be conducted in any suitable reactor, including fixed and fluidized bed reactors. The reaction vessel should be constructed from materials which are resistant to the corrosive effects of hydrogen fluoride such as Inconel™ nickel alloy and Hastelloy™ nickel alloy.

Pressure is not critical. Atmospheric and superatmospheric pressures are the most convenient and are therefore preferred.

Practice of the invention will become further apparent from the following non-limiting examples.

EXAMPLES

In the following illustrative examples, all parts are by weight, all percentages are molar, and all temperatures are Celsius unless otherwise stated.

General Procedure for Fluorided Alumina Catalyst

A reactor (a 0.5 inch (1.3 cm) ID, 12 inch (30.5 cm) long Inconel™ nickel alloy pipe) was charged with the amount of catalyst as described in the following examples, and placed in a sand bath. The bath was gradually heated to 400° C. while N_2 gas at a flow rate of 50 cc/min was passed through the reactor to remove traces of water. The temperature was lowered to 200° C. and HF and N_2 gas (1:4 molar ratio) were passed through the reactor. The N_2 flow was decreased with time until neat HF was being passed through the reactor. At this point the temperature was gradually raised to 450° C. and maintained there for 15 to 300 minutes. X-ray diffraction analysis showed that the catalyst support was converted to essentially all aluminum fluoride.

The temperature was then decreased to the indicated value and, thereafter, the other reactant flows were started. The flows were adjusted to give the indicated molar ratios and contact times in the Examples.

The reactor effluent was sampled on-line with a Hewlett Packard HP 5890 gas chromatograph using a 20 foot (6.1 m) long, one-eighth inch (3.2 mm) diameter column containing Krytox® perfluorinated polyether on an inert support, and a helium flow of 35 cc/min. Gas chromatographic conditions were 70° C. for three minutes followed by temperature programming to 180° C. at a rate of 6° C./minute.

Example 1

Reaction of Pentafluoroethane and HCl

The General Procedure for Fluorided Alumina Catalyst was followed using 19.9 g (30 mL) of $CoCl_2/Al_2O_3$ (2% Co) as the initial catalyst charge. The HCl: CHF_2CF_3 (HFC-125) molar ratio was varied from 2:1 to 20:1, the reaction temperature was varied from 200° to 450° C. and the contact time (C.T.) was varied from 30 to 60 seconds. The results of these runs are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

T °C.	Molar Ratio	C.T. Sec.	% 125 ^a	% 115 ^b	% 124 ^c	% 114a ^d	% 123 ^e	% 1111 ^f	% 1120 ^g	% PCE ^h
200	20:1	30	95.8	0.5	1.7	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
250	20:1	30	89.9	0.4	3.6	0.0	5.1	0.1	0.0	0.3
300	20:1	30	73.7	0.4	4.6	0.0	13.9	1.0	0.1	6.1
350	20:1	30	49.4	0.3	4.0	0.1	15.2	3.4	0.2	27.0
350	12:1	30	47.0	0.3	4.2	0.1	14.6	2.3	0.2	30.7
350	2:1	30	62.9	0.3	6.3	0.1	15.4	1.3	0.2	13.0
400	20:1	30	23.8	0.2	2.4	0.2	7.6	4.9	0.8	59.3

TABLE 1-continued

T °C.	Molar Ratio	C.T. Sec.	% 125 ^a	% 115 ^b	% 124 ^c	% 114a ^d	% 123 ^e	% 1111 ^f	% 1120 ^g	% PCE ^h
400	12:1	30	22.7	0.3	2.6	0.3	7.8	4.1	1.0	60.5
400	10:1	60	13.7	0.5	2.2	0.4	7.1	4.4	2.1	68.9
425	12:1	30	13.5	0.5	1.8	0.3	5.2	5.4	1.6	70.8
425	10:1	60	8.3	1.0	1.8	0.4	5.7	6.3	3.7	71.6
425	6:1	30	22.5	0.5	3.9	0.3	9.9	6.5	2.0	51.9
450	20:1	30	7.1	0.3	0.8	0.2	2.0	5.2	2.0	81.9
450	12:1	30	7.9	0.7	1.2	0.3	3.4	6.9	2.6	76.0

^a125 is CHF₂CF₃^b115 is CClF₂CF₃^c124 is CF₃CHClF^d114a is CF₃CCl₂F^e123 is CF₃CHCl₂^f1111 is CClF=CCl₂^g1120 is CHCl=CCl₂^hPCE is CCl₂=CCl₂

Example 2

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Reaction of Pentafluoroethane and HCl

A 5/8" (1.6 cm) I.D. Inconel™ nickel alloy reactor was charged with chrome oxide (60 mL, 78 g, 12/20 mesh (1.7 to 0.84 mm)) and heated to 275° C. in a flow of nitrogen (25 cc/min) for about 20 hours. The temperature was reduced to 175° C. and a 2:1 molar ratio of nitrogen and HF was started through the reactor (total flow 100 mL/min). After one hour under these conditions, the molar ratio of nitrogen to HF was adjusted to 1:3 and the temperature increased gradually over a two hour period to 400° C. The reactor was then brought back to the desired operating temperature, the flow of HF and nitrogen stopped and the flow of reactants started. The CHF₂CF₃ (HFC-125)/HCl molar ratio was 1/5, the contact time was 60 seconds and the reaction temperatures were as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

T °C.	% 125	% 115	% 124	% 133a ^a	% 114 ^b	% 114a	% 123	% 1120	% PCE	% Other ^c
280	54.0	0.0	4.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	36.4	0.1	4.6	0.4
300	32.6	0.0	7.8	0.3	0.0	0.3	45.0	0.3	12.7	1.0
340	18.3	4.7	10.3	4.0	0.8	2.7	30.8	2.9	22.4	2.9
360	13.3	14.3	7.3	6.1	1.1	2.8	19.5	7.5	23.6	4.5

^a133a is CF₃CH₂Cl^b114 is CClF₂CClF₂^cincludes CF₃CH₃ and CCl₂=CClF

Example 3

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Reaction of CHClFCF₃ and HCl

A reactor (a 0.5 inch (1.3 cm) ID, 12 inch (30.5 cm) long Inconel™ nickel alloy pipe) was charged with 23.1 g (30 mL) of CrCl₃/carbon (29% CrCl₃). The catalyst was dried in a nitrogen stream at 300° C. prior to use. The HCl:CHClFCF₃ (HCFC-124) molar ratio was 6:1, the reaction temperature was 350° C. and the contact time was 30 seconds. The result of this run is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

% 125	% 124	% 114a	% 123	% 1111	% PCE
3.2	24.8	3.4	62.8	0.5	1.5

Example 4

Reaction of CH₂ClCF₃ and HCl

The reactor, catalyst and procedure were the same as those of Example 3. The HCl:CH₂ClCF₃ (HCFC-133a) molar ratio was 6:1, the reaction temperature was 350° C., and the contact time was 30 seconds. The result of this run is shown in Table 4 in area %.

TABLE 4

% 143a	% 133a	% 123	% 1121 ^a	% 1120	% PCE
1.7	60.7	1.0	2.6	28.6	3.7

^a1121 is C₂HCl₂F

Example 5

Reaction of CHCl₂CF₃ and HCl

The reactor, catalyst and procedure were the same as those of Example 3. The HCl:CHCl₂CF₃ (HCFC-123) molar ratio was 6:1, the reaction temperature was 350° C., and the contact time was 30 seconds. The result of this run is shown in Table 5 in area %.

TABLE 5

% 123a ^a	% 123	% 113a	% 122	% 1111	% 1120	% PCE
2.1	91.7	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.2

^a123a is CHClFCCl₂

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Example 6

Reaction of CH_2FCF_3 and HCl

The General Procedure for Fluorided Alumina Catalysts was followed using 19.0 g (30 mL) of $\text{CoCl}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ (2% Co) as the initial catalyst charge. The HCl: CH_2FCF_3 (HFC-134a) molar ratio was varied from 0.5:1 to 5:1, the reaction temperature was varied from 150 to 430° C. and the contact time (C.T.) was varied from 10 to 30 seconds. The results of these runs are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6

Hrs. on Stream	T °C.	Molar Ratio	C.T. Sec.	% 134a ^a	% 1122 ^b	% 133a ^c	% 1121	% 1120 ^d
2.0	350	2:1	10	13.2	0.4	70.4	1.7	12.5
4.0	350	1:1	10	27.2	0.4	67.1	1.0	3.1
6.0	350	0.5:1	15	35.6	0.4	62.9	0.2	0.2
9.0	310	1:1	10	60.1	0.0	33.1	2.3	3.6
12.0	250	1:1	10	88.3	0.0	9.5	0.8	0.4
14.0	250	2:1	10	88.3	0.0	9.5	0.7	0.5
16.0	310	2:1	10	67.9	0.2	25.7	2.6	2.7
19.0	350	2:1	10	29.3	0.4	53.2	3.0	13.1
24.0	410	2:1	10	9.7	2.6	62.7	5.5	19.0
27.0	430	2:1	30	4.3	4.1	60.7	7.7	18.4
31.0	350	2:1	30	20.1	0.4	65.1	2.3	11.2
41.0	150	2:1	30	97.2	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0
53.0	290	5:1	30	61.1	0.1	32.4	2.4	3.2
56.0	350	5:1	30	12.7	0.5	53.8	4.3	27.1
59.0	410	5:1	30	1.5	1.8	35.5	8.4	50.8

^a134a is CH_2FCF_3

^b1122 is $\text{CHCl}=\text{CF}_2$

^c133a is CH_2ClCF_3

^d1120 is $\text{CHCl}=\text{CCl}_2$

Example 7

Reaction of CH_2FCF_3 and HCl

The reactor, catalyst, and catalyst treatment were the same as those described in Example 2 above. The reactor was then brought back to the desired operating temperature, and flow of reactants started. The CH_2FCF_3 (HFC-134a)/HCl molar

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Example 8

Reaction of CHClFCF_3 and HCl

The reactor, catalyst, and catalyst treatment were the same as those described in Example 2 above. The reactor was then brought back to the desired operating temperature, and flow of reactants started. The CHClFCF_3 (HCFC-124)/HCl molar ratio was 1/5, the contact time was 30 seconds and the reaction temperatures were as shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8

Hrs. on Stream	T °C.	% 125	% 115	% 124	% 133a	% 114a	% 123	% 1111	% 1120	% PCE
4	160	0.0	0.0	89.4	0.0	0.0	10.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
6	200	0.1	0.0	56.7	0.0	0.0	42.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
9	260	1.4	0.0	10.4	0.0	0.0	85.8	0.1	0.0	1.9
12	320	7.4	0.1	11.1	0.6	0.8	55.9	1.0	0.8	21.7
14	360	10.3	5.5	6.8	2.9	3.9	21.2	2.6	6.1	37.8

TABLE 7

Hrs. on Stream	T °C.	% 134a	% 133a	% 1120
3	100	95.7	4.3	<0.1
10	150	66.0	33.1	0.7
16	200	13.0	85.3	1.4
20	240	0.2	93.9	5.3

ratio was 1/5, the contact time was 30 seconds and the reaction temperatures were as shown in Table 7.

Example 9

Reaction of CHCl_2CF_3 and HCl

The reactor, catalyst, and catalyst treatment were the same as those described in Example 2 above. The reactor was then brought back to the desired operating temperature, and flow of reactants started. The CHCl_2CF_3 (HCFC-123)/HCl molar ratio was 1/5, the contact time was 30 seconds and the reaction temperatures were as shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9

Hrs. on Stream	T °C.	% 125	% 115	% 124	% 133a	% 114a	% 123	% 1111	% 1120	% PCE
8	240	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	97.0	0.0	0.0	2.1
11	300	0.1	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	83.6	0.3	0.2	12.6
14	360	4.4	2.1	4.8	1.0	2.6	20.5	2.9	4.7	55.1
16	400	1.2	13.3	1.1	0.9	2.4	4.3	3.7	13.9	56.1

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Example 10

Reaction of CHF₃ and HCl

A reactor (a 0.5 inch (1.3 cm) ID, 12 inch (30.5 cm) long Inconel™ nickel alloy pipe) was charged with 39.0 g (30 mL) of chrome oxide catalyst and placed in a sand bath. The bath was gradually heated to 175° C. while N₂ gas at a flow rate of 50 cc/min was passed through the reactor to remove traces of water. After 2.5 hours, the nitrogen flow was stopped and HCl was passed through the reactor for 4.5 hours while gradually raising the reactor temperature to 425° C. At this point the temperature was reduced to 250° C. while passing HCl through the catalyst bed for an additional 15 minutes. Following this, the HCl flow was stopped and nitrogen passed over the catalyst overnight at about 250° C. Thereafter, the nitrogen flow was stopped and the reactant flows started.

The HCl:CHF₃ (HFC-23) molar ratio was varied from 2:1 to 20:1, the reaction temperature was varied from 250° to 350° C., and the contact time was 30 seconds. The results of these runs are shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10

Hrs. on Stream	T °C.	Molar Ratio	% 23 ^a	% 13 ^b	% 40 ^c	% 22 ^d	% 21 ^e	% 30 ^f	% 20 ^g
1.5	250	10:1	99.5	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
5.5	300	20:1	79.4	0.2	1.9	3.8	1.3	1.0	12.3
6.0	325	2:1	94.9	0.2	1.2	2.2	0.7	0.2	0.7
6.5	325	5:1	91.6	0.3	2.0	3.0	0.5	0.5	2.1
7.0	325	10:1	85.9	0.5	1.6	3.9	1.1	0.6	6.3
9.5	350	20:1	69.8	2.5	0.3	5.3	2.4	1.6	18.1

^a23 is CHF₃^b13 is CClF₃^c40 is CH₃Cl^d22 is CHClF₂^e21 is CHCl₂F^f30 is CH₂Cl₂^g20 is CHCl₃

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Example 11

Reaction of CHF₃ and HCl

A reactor (a 0.5 inch (1.3 cm) ID, 12 inch (30.5 cm) long Inconel™ nickel alloy pipe) was charged with 19.1 g (30 mL) of gamma-alumina and placed in a sand bath. The bath was gradually heated to 175° C. while N₂ gas at a flow rate of 50 cc/min was passed through the reactor to remove traces of water. After 2.5 hours, the nitrogen flow was stopped and

HF was passed through the reactor for 4.5 hours while gradually raising the reactor temperature to 425° C. At this point the temperature was reduced to 250° C. while passing HF through the catalyst bed for an additional 15 minutes. Following this, the HF flow was stopped and nitrogen passed over the catalyst overnight at about 250° C. Thereafter, the nitrogen flow was stopped and the reactant flows started.

The HCl:CHF₃ (HFC-23) molar ratio was varied from 0:1 to 20:1, the reaction temperature was varied from 275° to 350° C., and the contact time was 30 seconds. The results of these runs are shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11

Hrs. on Stream	T °C.	Molar Ratio	% 23	% 13	% 22	% 21	% 20
0.5	275	10:1	84.1	0.0	3.3	1.2	11.3
5.5	300	10:1	82.1	0.0	4.7	1.6	11.5
8.0	325	20:1	71.0	0.1	5.6	2.2	21.0
10.0	350	20:1	68.4	0.2	5.8	2.6	23.0

Example 12

Chlorination of CHCl₂CF₃

The reactor and catalyst were the same as those used in Example 11. The Cl₂: HCFC-123:HCl molar ratio was 2:1:5, the reaction temperature was varied from 275° to 325° C. and the contact time was 30 seconds. The results of these runs are shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12

T °C.	% 115	% 114	% 114a	% 123	% 113	% 113a	% 112/a	% 111	% PCE
275	0.2	0.5	12.7	22.5	2.0	48.7	7.7	1.2	3.5
300	1.0	1.4	16.0	2.1	2.5	59.5	9.3	1.7	4.8
325	3.3	1.9	15.8	0.0	2.5	55.8	10.5	2.1	6.2

Example 13

Chlorination of CH_2ClCF_3

A reactor (a 0.5 inch (1.3 cm) ID, 12 inch (30.5 cm) long Inconel™ nickel alloy pipe) was charged with 23.6 g (30 mL) of aluminum fluoride catalyst and placed in a sand bath. The bath was gradually heated to 176° C. while N_2 gas at a flow rate of 50 cc/min was passed through the reactor. After 28 minutes, the nitrogen flow was stopped and HF was passed through the reactor for 2.0 hours while gradually raising the reactor temperature to about 400° C. At this point the temperature was reduced to 280° C. while passing HF through the catalyst bed for an additional 55 minutes. Following this, the HF flow was stopped and nitrogen passed over the catalyst until the temperature was 200° C. Thereafter, the nitrogen flow was stopped and the reactant flows started.

The Cl_2 :HCFC-133a:HCl molar ratio was 4:1:20, the reaction temperature was varied from 250° to 350° C. and the contact time was 30 seconds. The results of these runs are shown in Table 13.

TABLE 13

T °C.	% 133a	% 114	% 114a	% 123	% 113	% 113a	% 112/a	% 1112a	% 111	% PCE
250	70.9	0.0	0.1	5.7	0.8	0.3	7.9	1.8	3.2	8.3
275	46.3	0.0	0.2	10.9	4.5	1.2	20.8	1.2	4.1	9.7
300	16.9	0.0	1.2	16.2	11.3	6.9	30.5	1.9	3.8	10.2
325	1.0	0.2	9.7	12.3	8.2	29.3	24.1	1.6	3.5	9.4
350	0.6	0.6	14.3	2.4	3.8	48.1	14.3	0.6	3.2	11.1

Example 14

Chlorination of CHCl_2CF_3

A. Catalyst Preparation

Samples of powdered gamma-alumina and graphite were dried overnight at 110° C. The dried, powdered gamma-alumina (100 g) was mixed with the dried graphite (96 g). A solution containing ZnCl_2 (4.6 g) in water (175 mL) was added to the mixture. The mixture was kneaded well after an

10 The surface area was 116 m²/g as measured by nitrogen adsorption.

B. Catalyst Activation and Reaction

The reactor (a 0.5 inch (1.3 cm) ID, 12 inch (30.5 cm) long Inconel™ nickel alloy pipe) was charged with 13.6 g (30 mL) of $\text{Zn-Al}_2\text{O}_3$ /graphite catalyst and placed in a sand bath. The bath was gradually heated to about 400° C. while N_2 gas at a flow rate of 50 cc/min. was passed through the reactor for about 2.5 hrs. The catalyst bed was then cooled under nitrogen over 1.5 hours to about 175° C. At that time in addition to nitrogen, HF was passed through the catalyst bed at 50 cc/min. After a few minutes at these conditions, a temperature rise to about 200° C. was observed. After an hour the temperature had decreased to about 175° C. whereupon the nitrogen flow was reduced to 20 cc/min. and the HF flow increased to 80 cc/min. Over 2.5 hours the bath temperature was gradually increased to about 340° C. At this point an increase in the catalyst bed temperature to 372° C. was observed. During the next 0.75 hour the bath temperature was gradually increased to 390° C. with the catalyst bed temperature rising to 411° C. At this point the nitrogen flow was increased to 75 cc/min. and the HF flow decreased to 25

cc/min. During the next 0.75 hour the flows were gradually adjusted to 15 cc/min. nitrogen and 80 cc/min. HF and both the bath and catalyst temperature were about 400° C. Following this, the HF flow was stopped and nitrogen passed over the catalyst until the temperature was 300° C. Thereafter, the nitrogen flow was stopped and the reactant flows started. The Cl_2 :HCFC-123:HCl molar ratio was 2:1:5, the reaction temperature was varied from 275 ° to 325° C. and the contact time was 30 seconds The results of these runs are shown in Table 14.

TABLE 14

T °C.	% 115	% 114	% 114a	% 123	% 113	% 113a	% 112/a ^a	% 1111	% 111	% PCE
275	0.0	0.0	0.4	90.7	1.4	1.5	4.1	0.0	0.3	0.9
300	0.1	0.6	4.5	60.0	6.8	9.8	13.9	0.2	0.8	1.6
325	3.5	2.0	16.2	0.4	3.0	55.3	11.0	1.3	1.8	5.3

^a112/a is $\text{CCl}_3\text{CClF}_2$ and $\text{CCl}_2\text{FCCl}_2\text{F}$

additional 20 mL of water was added After drying overnight 65
at 100° C. the sample was granulated to 20/40 mesh (0.84/
0.42 mm). Chemical analysis showed a Zn/Al ratio of 0.016.

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Example 15

Reaction of CH_3CF_3 and HCl

A reactor (a 0.5 inch (1.3 cm) ID, 12 inch (30.5 cm) long Inconel™ nickel alloy pipe) was charged with 49.0 g (30 mL) of acid washed silicon carbide (14–20 mesh, 12 mm-0.83 mm) and placed in a sand bath. The bath was gradually heated to 350° C. while N_2 gas at a flow rate of 50 cc/min was passed through the reactor. At this point the nitrogen flow was stopped and the reactants were passed through the reactor.

The CH_3CF_3 :HCl molar ratio was 1:4, the reaction temperature was varied from 350° C. to 375° C. and the contact time (C.T.) was 30 seconds. The results of these runs are shown in Table 15.

TABLE 15

T °C.	% 1132a ^a	% 143a ^b	% 1131a ^c	% 142b ^d	% 141b ^e	% 1130a ^f	TCE ^g	% 130a ^h
350	0.7	92.8	1.7	1.2	0.2	2.8	0.3	0.3
375	1.3	89.6	2.7	1.7	0.4	3.6	0.2	0.3

^a1132a is $\text{CH}_2=\text{CF}_2$

^b143a is CH_3CF_3

^c1131a is $\text{CH}_2=\text{CClF}$

^d142b is CH_3CClF_2

^e141b is $\text{CH}_3\text{CCl}_2\text{F}$

^f1130a is $\text{CH}_2=\text{CCl}_2$

^gTCE is $\text{CHCl}=\text{CCl}_2$

^h130a is $\text{CCl}_3\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}$

It is understood that the invention is not confined to the particular formulations and examples herein illustrated, but it embraces such modified forms thereof as come within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed:

1. A method for reducing the fluorine content of an acyclic saturated compound of the formula $\text{C}_n\text{F}_a\text{X}_b\text{H}_c$ wherein each X is independently selected from the group consisting of chlorine and bromine, and wherein n is 2 to 6, a is 1 to 13, b is 0 to 12, c is 1 to 9, and a+b+c equals 2n+2, comprising the step of:

reacting said acyclic saturated compound with a fluorine-reducing reagent consisting essentially of HCl in the vapor phase, in the presence of a catalyst, the molar ratio of HCl to the acyclic saturated compound being from 2:1 to 5:1, and the acyclic saturated compound being reacted with HCl at a temperature of at least about 250° C. and less than about 350° C. to produce compounds of reduced fluorine content with are primarily saturated compounds.

2. A method for reducing the fluorine content of an acyclic saturated compound of the formula $\text{C}_2\text{F}_a\text{X}_b\text{H}$ wherein each X is independently selected from chlorine and bromine, and wherein a is 1 to 5, b is 0 to 4, and a+b equals 5, comprising the step of:

reacting said acyclic saturated compound with HCl in the vapor phase at a temperature within the range of from about 250° to 450° C. in the presence of a catalyst to produce a perhalogenated olefinic product having fewer fluorine substituents than said acyclic saturated compound, the mole ratio of HCl to the acyclic saturated compound being at least about 5:1.

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3. The method of claim 2 wherein the catalyst comprises aluminum fluoride.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein the catalyst comprises chromium oxide.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein the catalyst is selected from alumina, fluorided alumina, magnesium fluoride on aluminum fluoride, alumina on carbon, aluminum fluoride on carbon, and fluorided alumina on carbon.

6. The method of claim 2 wherein the catalyst comprises a metal selected from the group consisting of chromium, zinc, Group VIII metals, Group VIIB metals, Group IIIB metals, Group IB metals, and metals having an atomic number of 58 through 71.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the metal is on alumina, aluminum fluoride, fluorided alumina or carbon; and

wherein the total metal content is from about 0.1 to 20 percent by weight.

8. A vapor phase process for manufacturing at least one compound selected from the group consisting of CF_3CHCl_2 and CF_3CHFCl by hydrofluorination of $\text{CCl}_2=\text{CCl}_2$ wherein $\text{CF}_3\text{CF}_2\text{H}$ by-product is produced, characterized by:

reacting by-product $\text{CF}_3\text{CF}_2\text{H}$ with HCl in the vapor phase at a temperature within the range of from about 250° C. to 450° C. in the presence of a catalyst comprising aluminum fluoride to produce $\text{CCl}_2=\text{CCl}_2$ as the major halogenated hydrocarbon product of said reaction of by-product $\text{CF}_3\text{CF}_2\text{H}$ with HCl, the mole ratio of HCl to $\text{CF}_3\text{CF}_2\text{H}$ being at least about 6:1; and using the $\text{CCl}_2=\text{CCl}_2$ produced by said reaction of by-product $\text{CF}_3\text{CF}_2\text{H}$ with HCl for said manufacture of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of CF_3CHCl_2 and CF_3CHFCl by hydrofluorination.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the catalyst comprises aluminum fluoride.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the catalyst comprises chromium oxide.

11. The method of claim 2 wherein $\text{CF}_3\text{CF}_2\text{H}$ is reacted with HCl in the presence of a catalyst comprising aluminum fluoride to produce $\text{CCl}_2=\text{CCl}_2$ as the major halogenated hydrocarbon product of said reaction of $\text{CF}_3\text{CF}_2\text{H}$ with HCl; and wherein the mole ratio of HCl to $\text{CF}_3\text{CF}_2\text{H}$ is at least about 6:1.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein the acyclic saturated compound is $\text{CF}_3\text{CF}_2\text{H}$.

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