

ELLIS HORWOOD SERIES IN CHEMICAL INFORMATION SCIENCE

# NAMING ORGANIC COMPOUNDS

**a systematic instruction manual**

E. W. Godly



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# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
1.1	Aims and functions	15
1.2	How to use the book	15
1.3	Selection principles	16
1.4	Editorial practices and conventions	18
1.5	Definitions of terms used in the <b>flow-diagram</b> and explanatory notes	20
<b>2</b>	<b>Stereochemistry</b>	
2.1	Optical isomerism	27
2.2	Geometrical isomerism	29
<b>3</b>	<b>Silicon chains</b>	
3.1	Silicon-only chains	32
3.1.1	Straight chains	32
3.1.2	Branched chains	32
3.2	Silicon/oxygen chains of alternating atoms	33
3.2.1	Straight chains	33
3.2.2	Branched chains	33
3.3	Silicon/sulphur chains of alternating atoms	34
<b>4</b>	<b>Heterochains</b>	35
<b>5</b>	<b>Hydrocarbon chains</b>	
5.1	Unbranched chains	38
5.1.1	Saturated	38
5.1.2	Unsaturated	38

5.2	Branched chains	39
5.3	Substituted derivatives	40
<b>6</b>	<b>Monocycloalkanes</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Monocycloalkenes</b>	
7.1	Unsubstituted	45
7.2	Substituted derivatives	46
<b>8</b>	<b>Single-ring aromatics</b>	
8.1	Unsubstituted	47
8.2	Substituted derivatives	48
<b>9</b>	<b>Heteromonocycles</b>	
	[Box 9 reached by the route (v)–(viii)–(ix)]	50
9.1	Trivials	50
9.2	Other saturated small rings containing N	51
9.3	Other single-ring heterocycles of three to ten atoms	52
9.4	Partially hydrogenated forms	53
9.5	Rings of more than ten atoms	54
9.6	Substituted derivatives	54
9.7	Box 9 reached by the route (viii)–(xiv)–(xx)–(xxiii)–(xxiv)	55
<b>10</b>	<b>Monocyclic hydrocarbons with attached chain(s)</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Bicyclic spiro-hydrocarbons</b>	
11.1	Saturated	59
11.2	Unsaturated	60
11.3	Substituted derivatives	60
<b>12</b>	<b>Two-ring aromatic hydrocarbons</b>	
12.1	Fused rings	61
12.2	Biphenyl derivatives	62
12.3	Assemblies of two-ring aromatic hydrocarbons	63
<b>13</b>	<b>Two-ring ‘alks’</b>	
13.1	Two rings of equal size in close association	64
13.1.1	Rings joined by a single bond	64
13.1.1.1	Saturated or mancunide	64
13.1.1.2	Partially hydrogenated forms	65
13.2	Two dissimilar rings directly linked	66
13.3	Identical or dissimilar rings with two or more shared atoms	66
13.3.1	Saturated	66
13.3.2	Unsaturated	67
13.3.3	Substituted derivatives	68
13.4	Two rings not in close association	68
<b>14</b>	<b>Heterospiro compounds</b>	<b>70</b>

<b>15 Benzo/hetero two-ring systems</b>	
15.1 Mancunide structures	72
15.1.1 Trivially named	72
15.1.2 Adaptation of Hantzsch–Widman system to benzo-heteromonocycles	74
15.2 Hydrogenated forms	75
<b>16 Fused heterocycles</b>	
16.0 Trivially named forms	76
16.1 Fusion	77
16.2 Numbering the fused system	78
16.3 Bonding and indicated hydrogen	79
16.4 Hydrogenated forms	81
16.5 Substituted derivatives	82
<b>17 Multi-ring heterocycles</b>	
17.1 Assemblies of three or more identical monocycles	84
17.2 Substituted derivatives of identical monocycles	85
17.3 Systems with three or more rings fused together	85
17.4 Assemblies of fused heterocyclic systems	89
17.5 Substituted derivatives of fused heterocyclic systems	89
<b>18 Multi-ring carbocycles</b>	
18.1 Trivially named ring-systems	91
18.2 Fused polycyclic hydrocarbons	92
18.3 Other modes of close association	94
18.3.1 All identical structures	95
18.3.2 The structure containing two or more identical units directly linked	95
18.3.3 Assemblies of fused polycarbocycles	96
18.4 The structure having no direct linkage between identical units	97
<b>19 Bridged systems</b>	
19.1 Bicyclo compounds	98
19.2 Fused ring aromatic and heterocyclic base-components	100
19.3 Cages	101
<b>20 More complex polycyclic spiro-compounds</b>	102

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## Seniority of ring-systems, chains and ring-with-chain systems

- A. Ring-systems
- B. Chains
- C. Seniority of ring-system vs. chain



<b>21 Radicofunctionals</b>	
21.0 General notes	105
21.1 Cations	105
21.2 Acyl halides	107
21.3 Ring-flanked ketones and thioketones	107
21.3.1 Unsubstituted ketones	107
21.3.2 Substituted derivatives	108
21.3.3 Ring-flanked thioketones	110
21.4 Hydrazones	110
21.5 Oximes	111
21.5.1 Unsubstituted oximes	111
21.5.2 Substituted derivatives of oximes	112
21.6 Radico-alcohols	113
21.7 Esters of inorganic acids	115
21.8 Hydroperoxides	115
21.9 Amines	116
21.9.1 Trivially named phenylamines	116
21.9.2 Primary amines	116
21.9.3 Secondary amines	117
21.9.4 Tertiary amines	119
21.10 Imines	121
21.11 Ethers	122
21.11.0 General	122
21.11.1 Trivially named ethers	122
21.11.2 Mono-ethers, systematic radiofunctional names	124
21.11.3 Di- and poly-ethers	125
21.12 Sulphides and polysulphides	126
21.12.1 Monosulphides	126
21.12.2 Polysulphides	127
21.13 Sulphoxides	127
21.14 Sulphones	128
21.15 Peroxides	128
21.16 Azides	129
21.17 Oxides	130
<b>22 Vari-functional acyclic compounds</b>	
22.0 Subsidiary flow-diagram	133
22.1 Carboxylic acids with trivial names covering more than one kind of subsidiary functional group	133
22.2 Trivial names covering -COOH and a functional group	135
22.2.0 -COOH plus either -COOM or -COOR	135
22.2.1 -COOH plus amide: amic acids	137
22.2.2 -COOH plus aldehyde: aldehydic acids	138
22.2.3 -COOH plus ketone: keto acids (oxo acids)	138
22.2.4 -COOH plus -OH: hydroxy acids	139
22.2.5 -COOH plus amine: amino acids	139
22.3 Aminosulphonic acids	141

**Table of contents**

9

22.4	Derivatives of the trivially named acids of sections 22.2.1–22.2.5	142
22.4.1	Salts and esters	142
22.4.2	Acyl halides	142
22.4.3	Nitriles	143
22.4.4	Carboxylic amides	143
22.4.5	Aldehydes	144
22.5	Substituted derivatives	144
<b>23</b>	<b>Vari-functional cyclic compounds</b>	
23.0	Introduction	146
23.1	The PG and one or more FGs covered by a trivial name	146
23.1.1	Carboxylic acids	147
23.1.1.1	Amic acids	147
23.1.1.2	Aldehydic acids	148
23.1.1.3	Hydroxy acids	148
23.1.1.4	Amino acids	148
23.1.1.5	Etheric acids	148
23.1.2	Amino-sulphonic acids	148
23.1.3	Aldehydes	149
23.1.4	Acyloins	149
23.1.5	Amines	150
23.1.6	Functional derivatives of acids of sections 23.1.1 and 23.1.2	150
23.1.6.1	Anions	150
23.1.6.2	Salts and esters	150
23.1.6.3	Acyl halides	150
23.1.6.4	Amides	151
23.1.6.5	Amidines	151
23.1.6.6	Nitriles	152
23.1.6.7	Aldehydes	152
23.2	Substituted derivatives	152
<b>24</b>	<b>Mono-PG ring-systems</b>	
24.0	Preamble	154
24.1	Carboxylic acids	154
24.1.1	Trivially named	154
24.1.2	Systematically named	155
24.2	Peroxy acids	156
24.3	Cyclic anhydrides	156
24.4	Thioic and dithioic acids	157
24.5	Sulphonic acids	157
24.6	Anions	157
24.7	Salts	157
24.8	Esters	157
24.9	Lactones and lactams	158
24.9.1	Lactones	158
24.9.2	Lactams	159
24.10	Acyl halides	159

24.11	Urea derivatives	160
24.12	Amides	161
24.12.1	Carboxamides	161
24.12.2	Sulphonamides	161
24.12.3	Carbothioic amides	161
24.13	Hydrazides	161
24.14	Imides	162
24.15	Amidines	162
24.16	Nitriles	162
24.17	Aldehydes	163
24.18	Ketones	163
24.18.1	The $\text{>C=O}$ group attached directly to two separate ring-systems	163
24.18.2	The $\text{>C=O}$ group attached also to a chain	163
24.18.3	The $\text{>C=O}$ group occupying a ring position	165
24.19	Thioketones	167
24.20	Oximes	168
24.21	Alcohols and their metal derivatives	168
24.21.1	Trivially named alcohols	168
24.21.2	Systematically named alcohols	169
24.21.3	Metal derivatives of alcohols	169
24.22	Phenols and their metal derivatives	170
24.22.1	Trivially named phenols	170
24.22.2	Systematically named phenols	171
24.22.3	Hydrogenated forms	171
24.22.4	Metal derivatives of phenols	172
24.23	Esters of inorganic acids (other than HX)	172
24.24	Thiols	173
24.25	Amines	173
24.25.1	Trivially named cyclic amines	174
24.25.2	Systematically named cyclic amines	174
24.26	Substituted derivatives	174
<b>25</b>	<b>Mono-PG chains</b>	
25.1	Carboxylic acids	178
25.1.1	Trivially named	178
25.1.2	Systematically named	181
25.2	Peroxy acids	182
25.3	Monothioic acids	183
25.4	Dithioic acids	184
25.5	Sulphonic acids	184
25.6	Salts	185
25.7	Carboxylic anhydrides	186
25.8	Esters	186
25.8.1	Esters of carboxylic acids	186
25.8.2	Esters of carbothioic acids	187
25.8.3	Esters of sulphonic acids	187
25.8.4	Esters of inorganic acids	188

## Table of contents

11

25.9	Lactones	188
25.10	Acyl halides	188
25.11	Carbothioic halides	189
25.12	Halides of sulphonic acids	189
25.13	Ureas	189
25.14	Amides	190
25.15	Amidines	191
25.16	Nitriles	191
25.17	Aldehydes	192
25.18	Ketones	192
25.19	Thioketones	193
25.20	Oximes	193
25.21	Alcohols	193
25.22	Thiols	194

## 26 Poly-PG acyclic compounds

26.0	Preamble	196
26.1	Polybasic carboxylic acids	197
26.1.1	Trivially named saturated dicarboxylic acids	197
26.1.2	Trivially named unsaturated dicarboxylic acids	199
26.1.3	Other dicarboxylic acids	199
26.1.4	Acids with three or more $\text{-COOH}$ groups	199
26.1.5	Carboxylic acid derivatives	200
26.1.6	Sulphonic acids and their derivatives	201
26.1.7	Other acids	202
26.2	Ketones	202
26.3	Oximes	202
26.4	Polyols	203
26.5	Linear polyamines	203
26.5.1	Diamines	203
26.5.1.1	Both primary amines or symmetrically substituted	203
26.5.1.2	One or more secondary or tertiary amines: not symmetrically substituted	204
26.5.1.3	Guanidines	204
26.5.2	Polyamines with three or more nitrogen atoms	205
26.5.2.1	All primary	205
26.5.2.2	One or more secondary or tertiary	205
26.5.3	Individual chains with four or more non-terminal, non-contiguous nitrogen atoms	205
26.6	Assemblies of identical units	206
26.6.1	Basic unsubstituted structures	206
26.6.2	Substituted derivatives	207

## 27 Poly-PG cyclic systems

27.0	Preamble	209
------	----------	-----

27.1	Carboxylic acids	210
27.1.1	Trivially named	210
27.1.2	Systematically named	211
27.2	Thioic acids	212
27.3	Functional derivatives of acids	212
27.3.1	Non-cyclising	212
27.3.2	Cyclising	213
27.3.2.1	Anhydrides	213
27.3.2.2	Cyclic esters	214
27.3.2.3	Imides	214
27.4	Polyketones	215
27.4.1	$>C=O$ adjacent to a ring-system	215
27.4.2	$>C=O$ adjacent to two ring-systems	215
27.4.3	$>C=O$ occupying a ring position	216
27.4.3.1	Quinones	216
27.4.3.2	Non-quinonoid ring-polyketones	217
27.5	Oximes	218
27.6	Cyclic polyols	218
27.6.1	Trivially named	218
27.6.2	Systematically named	219
27.7	Cyclic polyamines	219
27.7.0	Preamble	219
27.7.1	Diamines, both primary or symmetrically N-substituted	220
27.7.2	Other-polyamines	220
27.8	Assemblies	221
<b>Appendix A.</b>	<b>Classes of compound not covered in the book</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Appendix B.</b>	<b>Rules for special-structure compounds</b>	<b>226</b>
B-1	Cephalosporins	226
B-2	Ergoline derivatives	227
B-3	Morphines	229
B-4	Penicillins	230
B-5	Tetracyclines	230
<b>Appendix C.</b>	<b>Radicals (attached groups)</b>	<b>232</b>
C-0.1	Nomenclature of radicals	232
C-0.2	Recognition of radicals	232
C-0.3	Citation of radicals in a name	233
C-1	Radicals derived from carbon-chains	233
C-1.1	Univalent	233
C-1.1.0	Preamble	233
C-1.1.1	Saturated (unbranched)	233
C-1.1.2	Saturated (branched)	234
C-1.1.3	Unsaturated	235
C-1.2	Divalent	235
C-1.3	Multivalent	236

	<b>Table of contents</b>	<b>13</b>
C-2	Heteroatomic and composite radicals	237
C-2.1	Monovalent heteroatomic radicals	237
C-2.2	Composite monovalent radicals	237
C-2.3	Acyl radicals	239
C-2.4	Ionic forms	240
	C-2.4.1 Cations formed by gaining a proton	240
	C-2.4.2 Anions formed by loss of a proton from an acid	241
C-2.5	Divalent chain radicals	241
C-3	Cyclic radicals	242
C-3.1	Monovalent	242
	C-3.1.1 General	242
	C-3.1.2 Hydrogenated forms	244
	C-3.1.3 Ring-with-chain radicals	245
C-3.2	Divalent	246
C-4	Substituted radicals	246
C-4.1	Open chain radicals	246
C-4.2	Substituted cyclic radicals	248
C-4.3	Composite divalent radicals for assemblies	250
	C-4.3.1 Name-construction principles	250
	C-4.3.2 Substituted composite divalent radicals for use in assembly names	251
<b>Appendix D. Guide to name-construction</b>		
D-1	Formation of names	252
	D-1.1 Substitutive nomenclature	252
	D-1.2 Radicofunctional nomenclature	254
D-2	Numbering	255
	D-2.1 Molecular structures	255
	D-2.2 Radicals	257
D-3	Name-construction using worked examples	258
<b>Table 1—Functional groups usable as name-endings</b>		<b>262</b>
<b>Table 2—Groups which cannot have suffix-status—always cited as prefixes</b>		<b>267</b>
<b>Table 3—Heterocyclic prefixes for replacement nomenclature (in decreasing order of priority)</b>		<b>267</b>
<b>Flow-diagram</b>		

## Author's note

In 1981 I was asked if it would be possible to write an instruction manual on systematic organic chemical nomenclature—capable of covering 90% or so of all new compounds of interest in international trade—to be useful to readers with some knowledge of chemistry but little or none of the IUPAC Rules of Organic Nomenclature. It would not have been in any way reprehensible to have given a negative answer and only time and usage will show whether a simple 'NO' will prove ultimately to have been the correct response.

However, my feeling was that IUPAC systematic names are constructed according to rational and logically consistent principles which ought to be capable of explanation in terms comprehensible to the general reader and so I undertook the task despite the fact that no such 'stand-alone' work had to my knowledge been successfully produced.

At that time, my division of the Laboratory of the Government Chemist had been very active in producing a Euro-list of trade chemicals classified under their respective headings of the Common Customs Tariff. This list, now incorporated into the 'European Customs Inventory of Chemicals', EEC, Luxembourg, 1988, contained over 16 000 entries and its compilation had compelled us to supplement the IUPAC rules with in-house sub-rules and rationales aimed at consistent treatment of analogues. Armed with this body of experience, I felt that the task should not prove too onerous. That proved to be over-optimistic. However, trials on an earlier attempt gave a 70% success-rate and this 1988 revision has plugged a number of gaps, removed errors and inconsistencies and remedied inadequacies.

Mercifully, an instruction manual leaves no room for argument and non-preferred methods of naming, however valid, are omitted from consideration. Names produced by following these instructions should prove consistent with those of the Euro-Customs Inventory, Nos. 10001–26591.

For best results, readers should beware of using their own knowledge of the subject to modify specific instructions. These should be read carefully and applied faithfully.

Not every conceivable molecular structure is covered by the book; some rarely encountered species have been omitted, for to aim close to 100% success would require a very much thicker volume even than this. However, it is hoped that it will prove effective in most cases.

If this is found not to be so, or if a reader experiences any difficulty in obtaining such a result, enquiries should be directed to the Chemical Nomenclature Advisory Service, at the Laboratory of the Government Chemist, Teddington.

I am indebted to my colleague Mr Ivor Cohen for valuable advice and help in the preparation of this revised version.

E.W.G.

# 1 Introduction

This work was undertaken in the context of the application of Council Directive 79/831/EEC; of 18th September 1979, amending for the sixth time Directive 67/548/EEC on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances.

## 1.1 AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

This book is in no way intended to replace the IUPAC Rules of Organic Chemical Nomenclature, to which serious students of the subject are directed,<sup>†</sup> but rather to provide a programme or recipe for devising an acceptable name for a new chemical under those Rules, in the form of a set of procedures not requiring the skills of a nomenclature-specialist. Some knowledge of basic chemistry is, however, assumed on the part of the reader. The names so generated will, it is hoped, provide unambiguous names in an internationally acceptable style, namely that of the IUPAC Rules.

These rules have been the basis of our naming rationales because the above-cited directive requires notification of new chemical substances before they are placed on the Community market, defined in these notifications by an IUPAC name. This approach has been adopted because the IUPAC philosophy for naming chemicals offers the following practical advantages for normal communication in international trade-contexts over more highly systematized methods:

- (1) they incorporate a body of useful, established trivial names, which must continue to be the obvious first-choice names in all manner of practical industrial as well as legislative and regulatory contexts,
- (2) their rules are translated into several languages and are continuing to expand their international acceptance,

<sup>†</sup> *Nomenclature of Organic Chemistry*, Sections A-F & H, 1979, Pergamon.



- (3) their usages and conventions tend more often than not to result in names which are comparatively neat, succinct and readily intelligible to the chemical community,  
 (4) the IUPAC Rules have remained very largely the same for the last 30 years.

Against all that it must be admitted that, because of their traditional function of codifying various 'respectable' current nomenclature-practices, IUPAC Rules frequently allow more than one name for a given chemical. Accordingly, with a view to harmonizing the designation of new chemicals for the application of Directive 79/831/EEC, the methodology leading to a single, preferred IUPAC name had to be developed. To this end, *ad hoc* sub-rules devised for the purpose of obtaining consistency in the selection of preferred names for trade-chemicals in '*Classification of Chemicals in the Customs Tariff of the European Communities*'† have been used—with some amplification—in this book also.

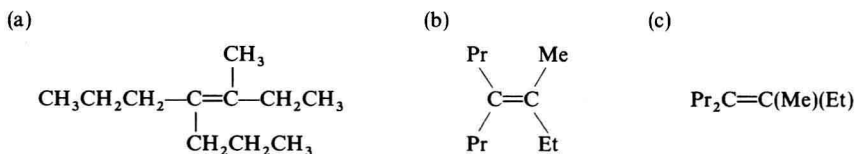
In view of limitations on size and convenient handling, such a treatment could not hope to cover all possible structures, including those not yet conceived. Accordingly deliberate omissions of rarely seen structure-elements have been made and no treatment has been attempted for sections of the rules which are particularly complicated. It is, however, hoped that 90–95% of naming problems likely to be encountered will be found to be covered adequately by following the detailed instructions provided. Questions on naming arising either from the 5–10% area not covered, or for any other reason should be directed to the

Chemical Nomenclature Advisory Service (CNAS),  
 Laboratory of the Government Chemist,  
 Department of Trade and Industry,  
 Queens Road, Teddington,  
 Middlesex, TW11 0LY, UK

## 1.2 HOW TO USE THE BOOK

It is advisable to read Appendix D before attempting to name any but the simplest structures. Having done that, proceed as follows:

Unfold the **flow-diagram** at the back of the book and, commencing at the starting-point on the left, follow the track by addressing each question to the known structure of the single chemical under consideration, following the path according to the answer at each stage. To do this effectively, it may be necessary to rotate the structural formula about any of the three Cartesian axes for purposes of comparison with the structures printed in the book. Moreover, there are a number of ways to depict the same molecular situation and non-chemists may fail to appreciate that they are, in fact, identical. As an example, the following methods of depicting 3-methyl-4-propylhept-3-ene by no means exhaust all the possibilities:



† Ed. by Forcheri, S. and de Rijk, J. R., EEC, Brussels, 1981.