

# Job Story:

## PROBLEM:

Find a long lasting, fiber-free insulation that can be installed without curtailing production, and can withstand the rigorous cleaning required by food processing plant.

## SOLUTION:

Armaflex closed-cell insulation met fiber-free requirement – and still looks good after 13 years!

**Project:**  
Merckens Chocolate Factory  
**Location:**  
Mansfield, Massachusetts  
**Insulation Contractor:**  
Anchor Insulation



## After 13 Years, Closed-cell, Fiber-free Armaflex<sup>®</sup> Insulation Still Favored by Chocolate Factory

No one likes *fuzzy* chocolate, least of all the chocolate experts at the Merckens chocolate factory in Mansfield, Massachusetts. The century-old factory has been supplying chocolate chips to well-known cookie makers and chocolate bars to candy makers for years. If you are in the chocolate chip cookie business, or the fine chocolates business, you *know* the name Merckens. What you may not know are the lengths that Merckens goes to maintain an utterly spotless, fiber-free factory environment.

With open vats of chocolate and exposed raw ingredients, it is essential that Merckens maintains an immaculately clean production environment. Over a decade ago, the factory underwent a major renovation and expansion, replacing insulation throughout the building and installing it on new equipment, including lines for chilled water, hot water, potable water, domestic water, waste, as well as insulating food processing components. Merckens chose Armaflex closed-cell insulation for all these applications. Not only has the insulation served its purpose, it still looks as good as new.

### Closed-Cell: The Ideal Solution For Food Processing

The selection of fiber-free Armaflex, however, wasn't just about long-term performance. It was also about the installation itself. During the original installation (which took place over a period of 8 months), the factory was able to maintain its regular production schedule. This would *not* have been possible if a fibrous insulation had been used, as this would have exposed the processing area to loose fibers during cutting and installing. Because Armaflex is 100% non-particulating, the sheets, tubes, and rolls could be cut and installed without fear of contaminating the area.



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Eric Fiske, Vice President of Anchor Insulation, prefers closed-cell insulation for any type of food processing application, not only because it's fiber-free, but because of its moisture-resistant properties.

*"Preventing condensation is critical in the food processing, chemical, and pharmaceutical industries,"* says Fiske, whose company is one of New England's largest and most respected insulation contractors. *"Dripping water can cause contamination and safety hazards. Thus, closed-cell and fiber-free Armaflex is the perfect solution."*

On a day-to-day basis, Armaflex also plays an important role in Merckens' chocolate making processes. Merckens uses hot and cold water circulation to maintain the temperature of several of its processes. A few degrees variance could mean that the chocolate doesn't temper or set-up correctly, and an entire batch could be ruined. With a thermal conductivity of .27, and water permeability of .08, Armaflex ensures long-term thermal efficiency. Fibrous insulations, on the other hand, are more vulnerable to moisture which significantly impairs thermal performance.



Today, ArmaTuff® products offer exceptionally durable alternatives to PVC jacketing or painting.

## Presentation Matters

What impresses Richard Maloney, Maintenance Supervisor of Merckens, is the fact that the installation still looks as good as it did 13 years ago. Private tours of the factory are not uncommon, so it is important that the factory always looks its best. Like many food processing facilities, Merckens installed a PVC jacket on most of the insulation. However, ArmaTuff, a new product family from Armacell, now provides alternatives to PVC jackets, even in food processing applications.

For large surfaces like tanks, vessels and larger pipes, ArmaTuff PLUS sheets and rolls exceed most building insulation codes for new construction and renovation, and are suitable for all-weather applications, meaning it will also withstand the rigorous cleaning required by food processing facilities. It's Armaflex insulation laminated with a 13-ply reinforced fabric scrim that is extremely resistant to tears and punctures, and requires no painting. For pipes, there is ArmaTuff White Pipe Covering. It's exceptionally durable and easy to apply. ArmaTuff is food for thought, for other facilities like Merckens who want to keep their plants as appetizing as the products themselves.

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