

Chapter 17 - Alcohols and Phenols

Properties of Alcohols

Alcohols can be weakly acidic or weakly basic. The amount of solvent stabilization, inductive effects and resonance effects will influence the acidity of alcohols. Some pKa values for various alcohols are listed below. Notice the phenols are much more acidic than normal alcohols. This is due to resonance stabilization of the negative charged formed after deprotonation.



Deprotonation of Alcohols

Alcohols need a pretty strong base to be deprotonated. With the exception of phenols, alcohols will not be deprotonated with hydroxide. Strong bases like sodium hydride, sodium amide, or reactive organometallics are generally used. Phenols can be deprotonated with NaOH as they are 10⁶ times more acidic than alkanols.



Preparation of Alcohols

Alcohols can be prepared by three general reaction types: substitution of alkyl halides, reduction of carbonyl compounds, and addition to alkenes.



Recall some of the addition chemistry from last semester; hydroboration (anti Markovnikov), oxymercuration (Markovnikov), dihydroxylation. *Trans*-diols can be prepared by the acid catalyzed opening of epoxides with water. Epoxides can be prepared directly from alkenes with a peracid. Halohydrins can also be prepared by addition chemistry.



 ⁹ What is the best sequence of reactions to synthesize the following compound starting from benzene? I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I	 1: 1) CH₃CH(CH₃)COCI, AICI₃ 2) CH₃CH₂CI, AICI₃ 3) H₂, Pd/C 4) Cl₂, FeCl₃
	 2: 1) CH₃CH(CH₃)COCI, AICI₃ 2) CH₃CH₂CI, AICI₃ 3) CI₂, FeCI₃ 4) H₂, Pd/C
	 3: 1) CH₃CH₂Cl, AlCl₃ 2) CH₃CH(CH₃)COCI, AlCl₃ 3) H₂, Pd/C 4) Cl₂, FeCl₃
	 4: 1) Cl₂, FeCl₃ 2) CH₃CH₂Cl, AlCl₃ 3) CH₃CH(CH₃)COCl, AlCl₃ 4) H₂, Pd/C