Potassium Selenocyanate

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Introduction

Potassium selenocyanate (KSeCN) is an easy-to-handle and readily available reagent. It is crystalline, colorless, highly hygroscopic, and air sensitive. Non-adequate storage may lead to its decomposition. This salt is soluble in protic solvents and non-protic polar solvent such as DMF, DMSO, NMP, and acetonitrile.

This reagent is commercially available and seldom prepared in the laboratory. It can be synthesized from metallic selenium and potassium cyanide in hot water or ethanol.

Methodologies employing KSeCN as the selenium source in the synthesis of organic selenocyanates and isoselenocyanates are practical and versatile. Because this functional group has a moderate reactivity, its conversion into other functional groups is highly interesting, allowing the formation of new C–Se bonds and the further generation of compounds with significant synthetic, pharmacological, and biological value.

Abstracts

(A) KSeCN is used as an effective source of selenium in the synthesis of symmetrical diaryl selenides. For example, Nageswar and co-workers have developed a methodology for the synthesis of aryl halides catalyzed by recyclable CuO nanoparticles under ligand-free conditions in DMSO, using KOH as the base (conditions a). Rao and co-workers reported the synthesis of aryl halides with aryl halides catalyzed by copper-catalyzed cascade reactions with CuI–trans-1,2-diaminocyclohexane (L1) complex in water and using Cs2CO3 as the base (conditions b).

(B) Bouchet, Peñéñory and Argüello synthesized aryl methyl selenolates and diaryl selenides employing KSeCN and aryl iodides using base-assisted photoinduced electron-transfer reactions. Aryl selenolate anions can be formed in the presence of t-BuOK as an entrainment reagent. Then, it can react with MeI or 3 yielding 4 or 5, respectively. In this work, the authors undertook a comparative study of a set of selenium sources.

(C) It is well known that the selenocyanate anion can be introduced into arenes by diazonium salt formation, followed by nucleophilic displacement. Nakamura and co-workers, used this methodology to obtain 1-iodo-2-selenocyanatobenzene as an intermediate to generate alkyl ortho-alkynylphenyl selenides which cyclize in the presence of platinum, rendering 2,3-disubstituted benzol[b]selenophenes. That cyclization proceeds by carboselenation through the addition of a C–Se bond to the alkynyl, followed by a direct 1,3-migration of the CH3R group.
(D) In the presence of an oxidizer, such as Br₂, KSeCN forms (SeCN)₂, which plays the role of the electrophile in electrophilic aromatic substitution reactions. This methodology was used by Sharma et al. for the synthesis of thiazole 12. This compound is a powerful PPARγ ligand which may possess anti-cancer properties.7

(E) Chandrasekaran and co-workers have developed a protocol for the synthesis of N-alkyl-β-aminodiselenides 13 from sulfonamidates 14 in the presence of KSeCN and benzyltriethylammonium tetrathiomybdate ([Bmim][MOSe₄]). 15 in a one-pot reaction.8 This methodology has been successfully applied in the synthesis of selenocystine derivatives and their direct incorporation into peptides.

(F) The C=N triple bond of organic selenocyanates can react with sodium azide to form selenium-substituted tetrazoles.9 Chandramouli and co-workers proposed a simple and convenient method for the synthesis of selenyl tetrazoles 16 by a one-pot three-component reaction between phenacyl bromides or 3-(2-bromoacetyl)coumarins 17, KSeCN, and sodium azide in ionic liquids.

(G) KSeCN reacts with acid chlorides or their analogues, thus obtaining iso selenocyanates. Ishihara and co-workers were able to synthesize 1-thia-6-oxa-6a-tetradecahexatetraynes (18) from thio carbamoyl isoselenocyanate 19 and β-diketone-derived anions 20. Compound 19 was obtained by reaction of KSeCN with dimethylcarbamothioic chloride (21).10

(H) Dehaen and co-workers employed KSeCN and 1,3-bis(bromomethyl)benzene derivatives 22a for the synthesis of homoselenocalix[n]arenes (23, n = 4, 6 and 8).11 In a later publication, they synthesized other analogues of 23 and demonstrated the coordination ability of those supramolecular structures to silver(I) ion through the selenium atoms.12

References


