

For Immediate Release

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FAQs: California Environmental Impact Report on PEX Tubing for Potable Water Systems

The California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) has certified the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on PEX (crosslinked polyethylene) tubing and adopted regulations approving PEX water distribution systems into the California Plumbing Code. The following provides answers to the following frequently asked questions about this decision, which goes into effect on Aug. 1, 2009.

Question: What does the EIR say about PEX?

Answer: The EIR states that the adoption of PEX tubing into the California Plumbing Code with proposed regulations would be “an environmentally superior action with respect to public health and hazards, water quality and air quality.” The EIR was a full study conducted from October 2007 through December 2008 on PEX tubing and its impact of air quality, water quality, performance, waste, recycling, energy consumption and natural resources in regard to manufacturing processes, installation, use and disposability.

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Q: How long has it taken to get PEX tubing approved for use in California?

A: Uponor has been actively pursuing the adoption of PEX in the California Plumbing Code since 2000. Three years of litigation resulted in a decision by the California Building Standards Commission to conduct the full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on PEX tubing.

Q: Has PEX tubing ever been used in California?

A: Currently, 180 of the more than 530 municipalities and counties within the state have approved the use the PEX tubing as an alternate material to copper and other materials used for plumbing pipe. Millions of feet of PEX tubing are in use in water distribution systems in residential and commercial applications throughout California.

Q: Who regulates the use of PEX tubing in California once the new state plumbing code takes effect Aug. 1, 2009?

A: The following agencies will adopt regulations for the use of PEX tubing in the types of construction under their jurisdictions:

- Housing and Community Development (HCD) — Residential construction, hotels, motels, etc.
- Division of State Architect – Structural Safety (DSA-SS) — State-owned buildings, universities, etc.
- Building Standards Commission (BSC) — Commercial construction not state-owned (retail)
- Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) — Hospitals, health care facilities, etc.

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Q: Does including PEX tubing to the California Plumbing Code mean it can automatically be used everywhere in the state?

A: Local jurisdictions may try to amend PEX out during the 180-day period before it goes into law on Aug. 1, 2009. However, a jurisdiction must have valid justification and submit its proposed amendments to the CBSC. Any proposed amendments must be put into effect before Aug. 1 to be valid.

Q: Why would builders and plumbers use PEX tubing instead of the other water distribution piping materials, such as CPVC, already in the code?

A: PEX holds close to 40% of the plumbing market share nationally; CPVC has about 18%. Both are listed to their own respective ASTM standards for use in plumbing systems, but CPVC lags PEX not only in share, but also in regards to features, installation characteristics and longevity.

- CPVC is a rigid tubing product, so that a connection is required with every change in direction. Connections are usually created by bonding the tubing and fittings together using solvent cement — a mixture of CPVC resin and liquid solvents.
- PEX is flexible, so fewer connections are needed to create a system. In addition, the unique shape memory of PEX tubing allows it to make watertight, leak-resistant connections without the use of torches, glues or gauges. With Uponor's exclusive ProPEX[®] fitting system, an expander tool expands a ProPEX Ring and the tubing to insert a fitting. Then the tubing and ring simply shrink around the fitting as they return to their original shapes.

In short, the PEX system is easier and faster to install than CPVC and consistently results in stronger, more reliable connections. For more information on PEX vs. CPVC, visit: <http://www.uponor-usa.com/Header/Systems/Plumbing/Homeowner/Overview.aspx>

Q: Does PEX tubing meet California's new lead-free legislation?

A: Uponor's PEX-a-based plumbing, fire safety and radiant systems will soon include a complete line of lead-free brass transition fittings and valves that will meet California lead-free legislation and exceed the requirements of the United States Safe Drinking Water Act. Combining these fittings and tubing with Uponor's extensive engineered plastic (EP) offering and its innovative ProPEX® Out-of-the-Wall Support System will provide a complete lead-free plumbing solution from the inlet to the faucet.

Q: Who should I contact at Uponor for more information?

A: For more information, please contact the following:

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Uponor Corporation is a leading supplier of plumbing, fire safety and radiant heating and cooling systems for the residential and commercial building markets across North America and Europe, and a market leader in municipal infrastructure pipe systems in the Nordic countries. Uponor Corporation employs 4,200 people in 27 countries and is listed on the NASDAQ OMX Helsinki Ltd., Finland.

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