

# PEX Pipe Gaining Popularity



Washington D.C. the no1 home builder on the Denver (Colo) market, saves his buyers an average of \$800 (670euros) per home, because of the pipe he chooses for the indoor plumbing system. Oakwood Homes has been installing crosslinked polyethylene (PeX) pipe for the past five years and this builder has no reason to go back to using copper. interestingly, the cost savings isn't the biggest reason the company chooses PeX pipe. "we look at it from a quality standpoint" said dan Carpenter, director of product development for Oakwood Homes. "it's less money to install and it's a superior plumbing system. For the homeowner its control over every fixture in the house and the ability easily adapt the plumbing when adding fixtures, building additions to the house or finishing the basement. The advantage to using PeX plumbing lies in how easily the flexibility of the material lends itself to manifold (parallel) systems, which eliminate hidden, interim connections. it also allows reduced overall pipe sizes, increasing water and energy efficiencies. According to a national association of Home Builders (naHB) research Centre study, when used with a centrally located demand heater, this type of system can offer 17% to 35% annual hot water energy savings. The partnership for advancing technology in Housing (PatH) a government-industry consortium based in Washington d.C., recently identified 10 emerging products and practices it believes are poised to jump into the mainstream with many new users. PeX

pipe plumbing systems is one of the 10. As printed in a major industry trade publication the PatH report states that PeX is a great choice in areas with "aggressive" water – low pH levels, dissolved carbon dioxide or hydrogen sulphide from decaying plants, all of which can eat away at copper pipe. Besides indoor applications identified by PatH, pipe industry officials are also pointing to PeX as a long-term solution for cities with drinking water service line issues – cities like Washington D.C. and others that have recently been in the news because of drinking water contamination concerns. Recent reports from Washington D.C. point to outdated and corroding metal pipes as contributing to the areas problem with lead in drinking water. "PeX pipe provides options that improve system performance, reduce installation time and lower total cost" said Camille Rubelz, P.E. director of engineering for the Plastics Pipe Institute (PPI). "also, PeX pipe does not corrode like metal pipes, is significantly quieter than other materials and is resistant to freeze damage". The resistance to corrosion and scaling is what makes PeX a long-term solution for drinking water systems both inside and outside a home or business. The science behind PeX pipe's smooth interior walls and its chemical properties make it resistant to mineral build-up when used with either hard or soft water. End users enjoy consistent flow and water pressure. PEX is certified by third-party testing agencies such as NSF and CSA to be safe for drinking water applications" Rubelz added. "Besides water plumbing systems, PEX can be used for many applications, including radiant floor heating, snow and ice melt, turf conditioning and municipal service lines". Rubelz said. PeX systems connect to standard valves and fittings, so it's easy and convenient to install. and it can cost less than half as much as copper – a significant saving for budget constrained city planners" Flexible PeX pipe is installed without the use of solders, flames or chemical. In plumbing systems, PeX pipes can be combined with remote manifolds to reduce the amount of pipes and fittings, speed installation, balance pressure throughout the system and deliver hot water quickly to minimise wasted water and energy cost. PEX pipes and fittings systems must meet the very strict performance requirements of standards such as ASTM F876 and ASTM F877. Consumer confidence and satisfaction is driven by PeX pipes performance, safety and quality control standards – all of which are documented by independent, third party listing agencies. The Plastic Pipe Institute is the major trade organisation representing all segments of the plastics piping industry. Member companies share a common interest in broadening market opportunities that can make effective use of plastic piping. Reprinted with kind permission of PHC news.