

Polybutylene (Poly-B) Pressure Water Piping

Failures of polybutylene (Poly-B) water piping used in some homes in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and the United States have resulted in a number of class action lawsuits.

The notice of the Court's final statement approval was published in various Canadian print media on June 11, 2004. Related claims deadline was May 31, 2005 or up to 15 years after date of installation.

Poly-B in Alberta

The Poly-B piping installed in Alberta primarily used copper or brass metal insert fittings and soft copper crimping rings, **not the plastic insert fittings with either aluminum or copper bands which are reported to be more susceptible to failure.**

Poly-B piping was introduced to the Alberta construction industry in the mid-1970s. Unconfirmed estimates are that about 148,000 homes in Alberta have Poly-B water systems.

Poly-B will not be in your home if it was built before 1975 and no plumbing renovations have since been carried out.

Homeowners can determine whether their homes have Poly-B waterlines by looking for a grey coloured flexible plastic piping. The plastic insert fittings are the same grey colour as Poly-B pipe, while the non-ferrous insert fitting are made from copper or brass.

Product Information

Poly-B water piping had been installed in residential dwellings and commercial buildings throughout Canada for more than 20 years.

Poly-B piping and fittings were intended for use in both hot and cold water distribution systems for pressures up to 100 psi (690 kPa) and operating at temperatures up to and including 180°F (82°C).

Poly-B piping can be identified by its light grey colour and by the continuous permanent markings. The markings indicate: pipe size, manufacturer's name or trademark, date code, material designation, pressure rating, certification agency and construction standard (e.g., CSA-B 137.8). Some manufactures stamped on the pipe that it was not to be used on continuous circulating hot water lines.

Poly-B piping was produced from polybutylene resin and in the spring of 1998, manufacturers stopped producing Poly-B piping because suppliers suspended production of this resin.

Poly-B piping was tested and certified by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and remained an acceptable product for potable water systems, but stipulated that the pipe was not to be used for continuous circulating hot water lines as listed in the NRC-CNRC National Plumbing Code of Canada 1995.

Poly-B piping is no longer listed as an acceptable plumbing piping material in the current National Plumbing Code of Canada 2005. However codes are not retroactive, so previous acceptable products that are not listed in the new codes do remain acceptable if the product does not pose a health/safety hazard.

Please address requests for additional information and any questions by either calling 1-866-599-4599 or writing to:

Canadian Polybutylene Claims Facility
2323 Younge Street, 8th floor
Toronto, ON M4P 2C9
www.PBSettlement.ca

Installers and consumers are encouraged to report product failures by contacting Alberta Municipal Affairs, Safety Services Branch, Plumbing and Gas at 1-866-421-6929