



Home Tips®



• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 3697 HABERSHAM LANE, DULUTH, GEORGIA 30096, 770-849-0920 • JUNE 2004 •

Q & A

Telling Clients about Polybutylene Plumbing?

What's the best way to handle the situation when during an inspection you find Polybutylene pipe used in the home? Certainly, you don't want to cause undue concern, but at the same time you want to make sure that the buyer is aware that there are potential problems.

Depending upon the particular circumstances, here's what I often say to address the issue:

"I want to point out that the plumbing pipes in the yard and/or inside the home are Polybutylene. Polybutylene was widely used in the 80's and early 90's, but is rarely used today because it has gained a reputation for developing leaks.

Based upon what can be seen at this time, I can find no specific problems with the Polybutylene plumbing in this house. Whether or not you are likely to experience plumbing problems in the future is unknown.

In order to put things in perspective, I want to make you aware of the following statistics:

1. Less than ten percent of the homes equipped with Polybutylene plumbing have experienced leaks.
2. Most Polybutylene leaks occur in the yard (usually between the twelfth and fifteenth years).
3. Less frequently, the Polybutylene piping inside the house can also develop leaks, but typically this happens in the early life of the home (third to fifth years), and usually at the fittings.

In what was the largest class action lawsuit settlement in history (Cox vs. Shell Oil, et al.), the Polybutylene resin manufacturers have established a \$950 million fund to be used to settle claims arising from Polybutylene pipe failures. In order to be eligible for recovery under the terms of the class action settlement, Polybutylene must have had at least one "leak" as defined in the settlement, and Polybutylene plumbing must have been installed between January 1, 1978

and July 31, 1995.

Claims can be submitted to Consumer Plumbing Recovery Center (CPRC) in Plano, Texas. The telephone number is (800) 876-4698. In the unlikely event you may some day need to make a claim, I suggest that you keep that number for your records."

Update: View settlement information online at www.kinsella.com/polybutylene/index.htm or www.pbpipe.com/index1.htm

For a document with images of eligible pipes and fittings, go to www.pbpipe.com/eligible_systems.htm

Source: Bob Clein, P.E., Georgia Engineering Associates, Inc.

Requirements:

YARD SERVICE LINES

Leaks must occur in the "Big Blue" yard service line piping within 10 years of the original installation. Claims must be made within 11 years of the original installation.

POLYBUTYLENE WITH ACETAL FITTINGS

Leaks must occur in the polybutylene piping with the plastic fittings within 13 years of the original installation. Claims must be made within 14 years of the original installation.

POLYBUTYLENE WITH COPPER FITTINGS

Leaks must occur in the polybutylene piping with the copper fittings within 16 years of the original installation. Claims must be made within 17 years of the original installation.

FINAL DEADLINE

All leaks must occur on or before January 31, 2009 and must be filed no later than May 1, 2009.

New Technology In Gas Water Heaters Can Save Lives

A new, safer era in gas water heater technology began in July 2003, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. A voluntary standard developed by industry, in cooperation with the commission, calls for conventional tank-type gas water heaters manufactured after July 1, 2003,



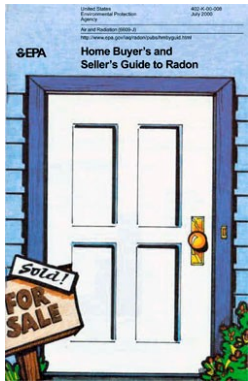
to be equipped with new safety technology. This technology, often referred to as a flame arrestor, prevents flashback fires by trapping and burning dangerous gas vapors inside of the heater, while preventing ignition of the vapors in the room.

Gas water heater ignition of flammable vapors is involved in nearly 800 residential fires, resulting in an average of five deaths and 130 injuries annually, according to commission estimates. The fires typically occur when consumers use flammable liquids, usually gasoline, for cleaning purposes or when a flammable liquid leaks or is spilled near the water heater. When the vapors come in contact with the appliance's burner or pilot light, the vapors ignite, causing a severe flashback fire.

"The new water heaters will save lives and property and reduce the number of terrible burn injuries that are caused by these fires," said CPSC Chairman Hal Stratton. "The redesigned gas water heaters, which are already on the market, show that industry can solve difficult problems to build the safest products possible."

New Radon Information

The EPA would like to distribute its recently released video, "Breathing Easy: What Home Buyers and Sellers Should Know About Radon." The video satisfies a long-standing need for a short visual educational tool on how to best include radon in residential real estate transactions.



With a bit of light humor, the video covers the basics, including radon science, the lung cancer risk, home inspection, building a new home radon-resistant, testing and fixing a home, disclosure, state radon offices, hotline and web resources, and key radon numbers, e.g., EPA's action level and the U.S. indoor and outdoor averages.

and key radon numbers, e.g., EPA's action level and the U.S. indoor and outdoor averages.

The primary audiences are home buyers and sellers, and real estate sales agents and brokers. Home inspectors, mortgage lenders, other real estate practitioners, and radon services providers will also find the video helpful. Single copies of the video are free from IAQ-INFO (1-800-438-4318) in VHS, CD and DVD formats.

"The Homebuyers and Sellers Guide to Radon" is also available as a pamphlet, as is the recently revised "The Consumer Guide to Radon Reduction - How To Fix Your Home." Both can be downloaded or ordered from the EPA Website to be used to inform consumers about radon. Go to www.epa.gov/radon.

If you have a question, change of address, comment, home tip or would like to send *Home Tips* to your clients, send your letter to *Home Tips*, Christian Building Inspectors, Inc., 3697 Habersham Lane, Duluth, Georgia, 30096-6111. You can also E-Mail your questions to us at rodharrison@christianbuildinginspectors.com. We reserve the right to edit questions for length.

Quote Of The Month

" EATING WORDS HAS NEVER GIVEN ME INDIGESTION."

WINSTON CHURCHILL

A Tip Of The Hat To:

Jennifer & Shack Lewis

Re/Max Greater Atlanta

5163 Roswell Road

Atlanta, Georgia 30342



Thank You

• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC. •

• Member: ASHI, GAHI, MAIA, ICC •

• ICC CODE CERTIFIED CABO ONE & TWO FAMILY DWELLING INSPECTOR NO. 1619 •

• Fully Insured With E&O, Liability and Worker's Compensation Insurance •

• Office: 1-888-257-0365 or 770-849-0920, Fax 770-849-0540, Cell 404-697-4129 •

• Web Page: www.christianbuildinginspectors.com Email: rodharrison@christianbuildinginspectors.com •



- Site
- Drainage
- Foundations
- Floor Slabs
- Crawl Spaces
- Basements
- Structural
- Interior
- Exterior
- Appliances
- Ventilation
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Heating
- Air Conditioning
- Attic
- Roofing
- Radon
- New Homes
- Warranty
- Construction