

PVC

PIPE ASSOCIATION ISSUE BRIEF

PVC PIPE: SAFE AND BENEFICIAL TO PUBLIC HEALTH

PVC pipe is one of the safest and most tested materials used in North America. For over 60 years, every aspect of its production, use and disposal has been evaluated and approved by government and independent certification and testing agencies.

It meets or exceeds all required health and safety standards and regulations governed by the U.S. and Canadian Safe Drinking Water Acts and other international statutes. Its use is monitored by independent agencies like NSF International – and government bodies like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ensure its safety through mandatory regular testing.

Additionally, organizations like the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Consumer Product Safety Commission have confirmed that PVC is a safe product.

CLEAN AND SAFE

PVC is approved for use around the world in water distribution and transmission, consumer products and medical applications. It is so safe that it is used for intravenous medical tubing, and it is the pipe of choice for ecologically sensitive environments like salt water aquariums, which must use the most inert and safest pipe materials available.

Its smooth, non-corrosive surface stays clean even after decades of use, unlike that of iron pipe which suffers from tuberculation, a form of internal corrosion and bio-film contamination which can be a breeding ground for bacteria.

The town of Walkerton, Ontario provides a case in point. In 2000, E-coli had infiltrated the municipality's iron-pipe water network, and purging it from the system was extremely difficult. Only after repeated and costly flushing with super-chlorination was the piping system safe to use again. Today, Walkerton, now part of the Municipality of Brockton, is replacing all its iron pipes with PVC.

THE REAL SCIENCE ON PVC

Despite its proven safety record and meticulous monitoring, ill-informed and unscientific allegations about PVC persist.

Claims that it's toxic have been refuted by the scientific community and people like Greenpeace co-founder Dr. Patrick Moore. The evidence shows it neither leaches chemicals like lead, cadmium, BPA or plasticizers, nor does it release harmful organotins, nor pose major hazards in its manufacture, use and disposal, nor create a dangerous bio-film nor form dioxins as water passes through, etc.

Moreover, it's impossible for PVC pipe to leach plasticizers, BPA, lead or cadmium, since these aren't even used in its manufacture nor are they part of its compound. Says Dr. Moore in his book, *Confessions of a Greenpeace Dropout*, such claims come from "a kind of religion based on belief rather than facts or evidence."

Finally, not only is dioxin not produced as it passes through PVC pipe, but claims that PVC manufacturing is a major dioxin polluter are also false. Forest fires, backyard burning and other manufacturing processes are the major contributors of dioxin.

MORE THAN ONE MILLION MILES OF SAFE WATER TRANSMISSION

Over 40,000 North American water utilities use PVC pipe today, and more than one million miles are in service – or about 78 per cent of all new drinking water distribution pipes installed on the continent. Some 10 million quality control tests have been conducted on water carried through PVC pipe since it was introduced in North America and around the world. All of them confirm the product is safe and beneficial to public health.