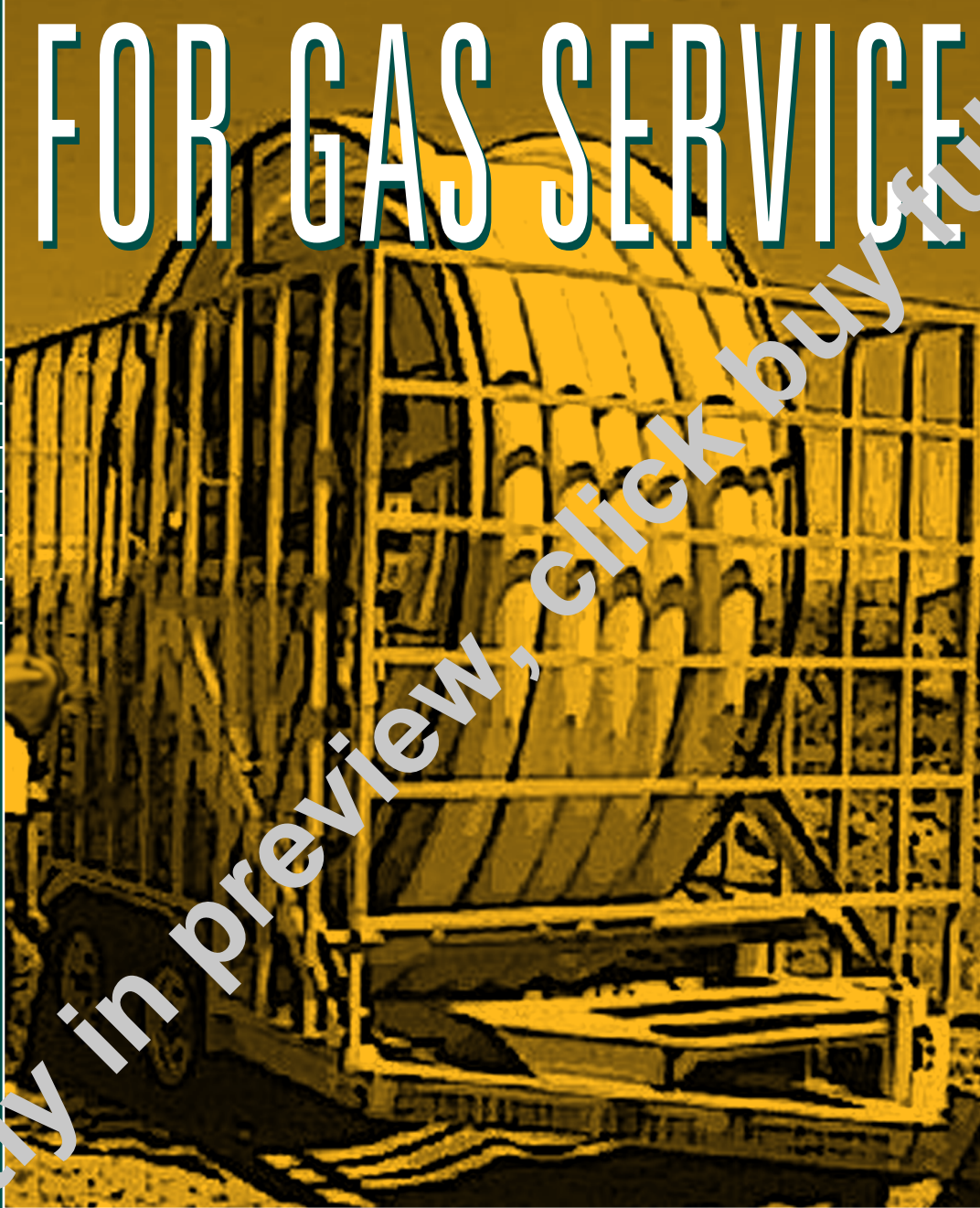


PLASTIC PIPE MANUAL FOR GAS SERVICE



American Gas Association

Eighth Edition

AGA

PLASTIC PIPE

MANUAL

FOR GAS SERVICE

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FOREWORD

In addition to adding color photos throughout, the following revisions were made in the 2006 edition of the *Manual*.

Chapter I. Plastic Piping Materials

1. Addressed reprocessed/rework materials.
2. Discussed higher performance polyethylenes, e.g. PE 4710.
3. Added new developments in PE resins.
4. Expanded section on Polyamide-11 (PA-11) piping materials and installations.
5. Revised ASTM D 3350 PE callouts.
6. Added PEX fusion joining information.
7. Revised the PE slow crack growth sections.
8. Revised the chemical resistance and weathering sections.
9. Added additional RCP information.
10. Added note that PVC piping is only permitted in repair applications.
11. Deleted HDS column "For Fuel Gas" in Table I-2.

Chapter II. Engineering Considerations for Plastic Pipe Utilization

1. Revised slow crack growth resistance (SCG) language.
2. Resistance to Rapid Crack propagation (RCP).
3. Expanded discussion of hydrostatic design basis (HDB) including elevated temperature HDBs.
4. Inclusion of references to PA-11.
5. Expanded notes about joining including electrofusion joining and Generic Fusion Procedures.
6. Advice concerning design for high temperature environments and pressures above 100 psi.

Chapter IV. Installation of Plastic Pipe

1. Format was changed for easier reading.
2. Added information about Cold Weather Handling.
3. Added color photos.
4. Added information to be considered when installing Category 2, full seal only fittings.
5. Updated old Standards references.
6. Modified trenching and backfilling section.
7. Added reference to ASTM design standard for Weak Links.

Chapter V. Personnel Training, Field Inspection, and Pressure Testing

1. General revision and rewrite of Typical Outline for Training.
2. Revisions to Pressure Testing sections.
3. Added Project Investigations section.

Chapter VI. Maintenance, Operation, and Emergency Control Procedures

1. Added sections on the Plastic Pipe Data Collection Committee (PPDC).
2. Revised the Static Electricity section.
3. Revised the Pipe Locating section.
4. Added additional guidance to the Repair section.

Added new Appendix H

1. PPI TN-30/2006 "Requirements for the Use of Rework Materials in Manufacturing of Polyethylene Gas Pipe"

CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE.....	i
DISCLAIMER & COPYRIGHT	ii
FOREWORD.....	iii
CONTENTS.....	iv
INTRODUCTION	ix
CHAPTER I. PLASTIC PIPING MATERIALS.....	1
PRIMARY CHARACTERISTICS.....	1
KINDS OF PLASTIC GAS PIPING MATERIALS	2
DESCRIPTION OF PIPING MATERIALS.....	5
CLASSIFICATION OF POLYETHYLENE MATERIALS.....	6
CLASSIFICATION OF POLYAMIDE MATERIALS.....	9
POLY (VINYL CHLORIDE) (PVC)	11
REINFORCED EPOXY RESIN PIPE	12
CROSSLINKED POLYETHYLENE (PEX) PIPE	13
NEW PLASTIC MATERIALS FOR PIPING AND MOLDED FITTINGS.....	13
FACTORS AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF PLASTIC PIPING MATERIALS.....	15
ENGINEERING PROPERTIES OF PLASTIC.....	15
FORECASTING THE LONG-TERM STRENGTH OF PLASTIC FITTINGS AND JOINTS	23
RAPID CRACK PROPAGATION.....	27
END NOTES	29
TABLES	
TABLE I-1. Typical Physical Properties of Plastic Piping Compounds	4
TABLE I-2. Hydrostatic Design Basis (Strength Categories) and Hydrostatic Design Stresses (HDS) for Thermoplastic Pipe Materials for Water Service at 23° C (73.4° F).....	8
TABLE I-3. Classification of Polyethylene Materials.....	10
TABLE I-4. Classification Example for ASTM D 3350 for PE 233464E Material.....	11
TABLE I-5. Typical Properties of PA 11 Based on Testing of 2" IPS SDR 11 Pipe	12
TABLE I-6. Factors Affecting Overall Performance of Plastic Materials in Gas Applications.....	14
TABLE I-7. Derating Factors for Exposure to Liquid Hydrocarbons.....	26
PHOTOS	
PHOTO I-1 Thermoplastic Pipes – Typical Pipes Installed over the Past 40 Years.....	2
PHOTO I-2. Fiber Reinforced Epoxy Pipe.....	3
PHOTO I-3. PE Pellets- Natural and Color concentrates	5
PHOTO I-4. PE Pellets- Salt & Pepper Blend.....	5
PHOTO I-5. Long Term Hydrostatic Test Equipment	23

PHOTO I-6. PENT Test Equipment	24
PHOTO I-7. PENT Test Apparatus	25
PHOTO I-8. RCP Test Apparatus 1	28

FIGURES

FIGURE I-1. Models of Viscoelastic behavior at Constant Load	16
FIGURE I-2. Excitations and Responses of Viscoelastic Materials	18
FIGURE I-3. PE Pipe Stress Rupture Curve at LTS = 1257 psi	20
FIGURE I-4. PE Pipe Stress Rupture Curve at LTS – 1265 psi	20
FIGURE I-5. PE Pipe Stress Rupture Curves	21
FIGURE I-6. Arrhenius Plot for Polyethylene Pipes	22

**CHAPTER II. ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS FOR
PLASTIC PIPE UTILIZATION**

INTRODUCTION	30
PLASTIC PIPING SYSTEMS	31
US FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REGULATIONS	32
CALCULATION OF DESIGN PRESSURE	32
DESIGN FACTOR	35
INFLUENCE OF TEMPERATURE ON PLASTIC SYSTEMS	37
INFLUENCE OF OTHER STRESSES ON PLASTIC SYSTEMS	39
DIMENSIONS	39
JOINTS	40
PERMEABILITY OF POLYETHYLENE AND PA-1 PIPE	40
FLOW OF NATURAL GAS IN PLASTIC PIPE	41
END NOTES	43

TABLES

TABLE II-1. Part 192 Summary of Standards applicable to Plastic Pipe	33
TABLE II-2. Effects of Temperature on Long-term Strength of PE 2406	34
TABLE II-3. Elevated Temperature HDB and Flow Rate Marking Code for Thermoplastic Pipe in Accordance with ASTM D2513-03a	36
TABLE II-4. Typical FDEs for ASTM D 2513 thermoplastic Materials at Various Design Temperatures	36
TABLE II-5. Pressure Rating of Dimension Ratio Thermoplastic Pipe as a Function of Material Hydrostatic Design Basis (HDB) Design Pressure Rating, PSIG	37
TABLE II-6. Minimum Wall Thickness by Pipe Size and Dimension Ratio for Thermoplastic Pipe	39
TABLE II-7. Typical Maximum Flow Rates Experienced in 60 PSIG Natural Gas Distribution Systems	42

FIGURES

FIGURE II-1. Stress Rupture, Time Plots for Polyethylene Pipe Materials Showing Influence of Temperature	31
FIGURE II-2. Applicability of Partially or Fully Turbulent Flow Formulas	43

CHAPTER III. PROCUREMENT CONSIDERATIONS, ACCEPTANCE TESTS AND SUPPLIER SELF-CERTIFICATION FOR THERMOPLASTIC PIPE, TUBING AND FITTINGS	44
MODEL SPECIFICATION	44
SELECTION OF VENDOR	44
ASTM STANDARDS AND TEST METHODS	44
PROCUREMENT CONTROL	48
USER QUALIFICATION AND ACCEPTANCE TESTING	49
MONITORING FIELD PERFORMANCE	57
MANUFACTURER SELF CERTIFICATION	57
PHOTOS	
PHOTO III-1. Six Inch Polyethylene Gas Pipe	46
PHOTO III-2. Six Inch PE Pipe on Uncoiler/ Rerounder	46
PHOTO III-3. Rerounding of PA-11 Pipe at Installation	47
PHOTO III-4. Typical Printline on 2 inch Coiled PE pipe	47
PHOTO III-5. Notch Tensile Test Apparatus	48
PHOTO III-6. Quality Measuring Tools	52
PHOTO III-7. Bend Back Test for PE	53
PHOTO III-8. Typical Acceptance PE Ductile Failure	53
PHOTO III-9. Ring Tensile Test	54
PHOTO III-10. Melt Index Measurement Apparatus	55
PHOTO III-11. Density Measurement Apparatus	55
PHOTO III-12. Elevated Temperature Sustained Pressure Test	56
FIGURES	
FIGURE III-1. Suggested Company Acceptance Plant to Obtain Quality Plastic Piping	50
FIGURE III-2. Suggested Manufacturer Self-Certification Plan to Obtain Quality Plastic Piping Material	51
CHAPTER IV. INSTALLATION OF PLASTIC PIPE	59
SHIPPING, HANDLING AND STORAGE	59
CUTTING	60
COLD WEATHER HANDLING	60
PLASTIC JOINING REQUIREMENTS	61
PROVISION FOR VALVES	79
BENDS AND BRANCHES	81
EXTERNAL STRESSES	81
ALLOWANCE FOR LINEAR THERMAL EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION	81
TRENCHING AND BACKFILLING	82
PIPE PLACEMENT IN TRENCHES	82
BLOWING TECHNIQUES	83
TRENCHLESS INSTALLATIONS	84
DIRECT-BURIAL REQUIREMENTS WITH PLASTICS	85
PLASTIC INSERTION IN MAINS AND SERVICES	86

PHOTOS

PHOTO IV-1. Uncoiling and Rerounding of PA-11 Pipe	61
PHOTO IV-2. Large Diameter Coiled PE pipe	61
PHOTO IV-3. Hydraulic Combination Fusion Machine, 2” – 8”	63
PHOTO IV-4. Butt Fusion Machine	64
PHOTO IV-5. Butt Fusion of PA-11 Gas Pipe	64
PHOTO IV-6. Butt Fusion of Large Diameter PE Gas Pipe	65
PHOTO IV-7. Saddle Fusion Machine	66
PHOTO IV-8. Saddle Fusion of PE Gas Pipe	67
PHOTO IV-9. Completed PE Saddle Fusion	67
PHOTO IV-10. Socket Fusion of PE Gas Pipe	68
PHOTO IV-11. Typical Butt, Saddle and Socket Fusion Joints in PE	68
PHOTO IV-12. Heating Coils in Electrofusion Saddle	69
PHOTO IV-13. Schematic of EF Coupler Showing Heating Coils	69
PHOTO IV-14. Completed PE Electrofusion Joint	71
PHOTO IV-15. Mechanical Couplings – Steel Bolted (Typical 1-1/4” and Larger)	73
PHOTO IV-16. Mechanical Couplings – Plastic Bolted on 4” PA-11 Pipe	73
PHOTO IV-17. Mechanical Couplings – Inserting “loose” Stiffener	74
PHOTO IV-18. Mechanical Couplings – Nut Follower Design	74
PHOTO IV-19. Mechanical Couplings – Nut Follower Cut Away	74
PHOTO IV-20. Mechanical Couplings – Marking Stab Depth	75
PHOTO IV-21. Mechanical Couplings – Stab Coupling Cut Away	75
PHOTO IV-22. Transition from Steel to PE – with Flange Adapter	76
PHOTO IV-23. Transition from Steel to PE – Metal Mechanical Coupling	76
PHOTO IV-24. Saddle Fusion Tapping Tee – PE	77
PHOTO IV-25. Electrofusion Tapping Tee – PE with Clamping Fixture	78
PHOTO IV-26. Mechanical Tapping Tee – PA-11 with Mechanical Coupling Service Outlet for PE	78
PHOTO IV-27. Risers – Variety of Designs	79
PHOTO IV-28. Valves – Small Diameter PE	79
PHOTO IV-29. Valves – Large Diameter PE	80
PHOTO IV-30. EFVs – Typical Installation in Service Outlet	81
PHOTO IV-31. Installation – Direct Burial of PE Pipe	83
PHOTO IV-32. Installation – Plowing in PE w/ Tracer Wire and Warning Tape	83
PHOTO IV-33. Installation – Directional Drilling	85
PHOTO IV-34. Installation – Insertion	85

TABLES

TABLE IV-1. Joining Methods for Plastics	62
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CHAPTER V. PERSONNEL TRAINING, FIELD INSPECTION, AND

PRECAUTIONS IN TESTING	89
PERSONNEL TRAINING	89
FIELD INSPECTION	91
INSPECTION OF FIELD JOINTS	92
PRESSURE TESTING	92
PRECAUTIONS IN TESTING	93

CHAPTER VI. MAINTENANCE, OPERATION, AND EMERGENCY CONTROL

PROCEDURES	95
PERFORMANCE OF PLASTIC PIPING SYSTEMS	95
COLLECTION OF PLASTIC PIPE FAILURE DATA	95
COLLECTION OF PLASTIC PIPE FAILURE DATA FOR THE VOLUNTARY PPDC COMMITTEE	96
PLASTIC PIPING SYSTEM SURVEILLANCE	96
OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE CODE REQUIREMENTS	96
EMERGENCY ISOLATION	97
STATIC ELECTRICITY	98
LEAKAGE SURVEYS	99
PIPE LOCATING	99
CRITERIA FOR USE	100
CHEMICAL ENVIRONMENTS	100
RODENT DAMAGE	100
REPAIRS	101
EXCESS FLOW VALVES	101
IMPORTANT OPERATING PRECAUTIONS	101
PHOTOS	
PHOTO VI-1. Squeeze Off Flow Control in PE Pipe	98
PHOTO VI-2. Use of a Wet Tape to Dissipate Static	99
APPENDIX A. SPECIFICATIONS, TEST METHODS AND PRACTICES FOR PLASTIC PIPES	103
APPENDIX B. GLOSSARY	108
APPENDIX C. OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION	115
APPENDIX D. PLASTICS PIPE INSTITUTE MODEL SPECIFICATION MS-2/2000	119
APPENDIX E. PLASTIC FAILURE REPORT	122
APPENDIX F. FUSION MACHINE QUALITY ASSURANCE CHECKLIST	126
APPENDIX G. NEW PLASTIC MATERIAL/PRODUCT EVALUATION CHECKLIST	128
APPENDIX H. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE USE OF REWORK MATERIALS IN MANUFACTURING OF POLYETHYLENE GAS PIPE TN-30/2006	133
Index	140
Change Suggestion Form	147

INTRODUCTION

This Manual is the **eighth edition** and is an updating of the issue published in 2001. Information is presented on those plastic materials, piping components, and design and installation procedures currently covered in codes and standards concerned with piping systems for natural gas distribution. It presents and summarizes data from manufacturers, users, trade associations and research organizations. The Manual has been prepared for use with the referenced ASTM standards and Part 192 of the Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, which contains the Minimum Federal Safety Standards for the transportation of gas and for pipeline facilities. The Code hereafter will be referred to as 49 CFR 192, Federal Code or Minimum Federal Safety Standards. When a Code section is referenced it is designated 49 CFR 192.XXX unless it is clear from context the reference is to Part 192 of Title 49.

The Plastic Pipe Manual Task Group recognizes that the data and information presented in this Manual could not include the complete details of the available information on plastic gas pipe. New knowledge and developments continually tend to supplement or make obsolete some of the present manual material. Some of the codes and standards quoted or cited as references also are undergoing continual modernization and must of necessity be consulted to determine applicability. State and local codes may specify additional requirements or restrictions. The Engineer should consult all applicable codes. It is, however, the hope of the AGA Plastic Materials Committee that this Manual will be acceptable to both users and suppliers as a prime reference on the subject of plastic gas piping.

In view of the rapid progress of technology in this field, it is recommended that this Manual be used in conjunction with a current copy of the Minimum Federal Safety Standards, 49 CFR 192 and the ASTM Book of Standards, Volumes 8.01 through 8.04 Plastics.

The latest information, as issued by the manufacturers of resins, pipe, piping components or tools, will contain in more detail, special or specific properties and recommendations related to the product. Unavoidably, the publications of the Gas Piping Technology Committee (GPTC) will, in part, parallel this Manual on many items as they specifically relate to the requirements of the Minimum Federal Safety Standards. Users are encouraged to reference the additional information provided by these sources.

Modern methods of physical and chemical analysis started to uncover the principles that govern the properties of natural polymers in 1920. Polymer compounds such as poly(vinyl chloride) were developed in 1931. But it took the shortages of copper and steel during World War II to start the use of plastic pipe in natural gas distribution.

The gas industry recognized the potential of plastic pipe after limited installation by a few companies in the late 1940s. Beginning in the early 1950s many companies were evaluating plastic pipe performance and developing know-how on an experimental basis. In 1953 the AGA Distribution Committee formed a subcommittee on Plastic Pipe Standards. The objective was to compile the physical and chemical data on specific types and formulations of plastic materials. In cooperation with the membership of the Society of the Plastic Industry, and through AGA sponsored research at the Battelle Memorial Institute, the gas industry proceeded with the development of such data. In a meeting of the Subcommittee in 1954, a special committee of the Thermoplastic Pipe Division of SPI recommended the first three thermoplastic materials for natural gas distribution pipe.

After the mid 1950s the installation of plastic pipe on an operational basis grew rapidly. Annual installations rose from approximately 100 miles to over 1,700 miles in 1965 and 2,600 miles in 1966.

Operational data, together with field data from experimental installations, was gathered by gas utilities and the material, pipe and fitting manufacturers for many years leading to the development of gas pipe standards. This work was supported by the American Gas Association (AGA), the Plastics Pipe Institute (PPI) (a Division of the Society of the Plastic Industry), the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM), and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME). Results of the research were incorporated in 1966 into the ASTM Standards D 2513 "Specification for Thermoplastic Gas Pressure Pipe, Tubing and Fittings" and D 2517, "Specification for Reinforced Thermosetting Resin Plastic Gas Pressure Pipe and Fittings." These, in turn, provided the basis for acceptance and inclusion of plastic piping into the USAS B31.8 1967, "Pressure Piping Code for Gas Transmission and Distribution Piping Systems."

In 1967, with formal acceptance by code groups, the door was opened for general use of plastic pipe. The cumulative miles of plastic pipe in use grew from 9,200 miles in 1965 to over 45,800 miles at the end of 1970, an increase of almost 500%. Annual plastic installations increased by over 500% in the five year period to 10,600 miles in 1970.

Extensive use of plastic for main and service installations has continued in the United States. In 1996 a magazine survey noted its respondents installed over 32,000 miles of polyethylene mains and services annually for

the past five years. The cumulative mileage of plastic pipe in use at the end of 1998 was estimated at over 550,000 miles. By the end of 2004 there were over 1 million miles of plastic mains and services installed in the U.S.

Since 1960 polyethylene has evolved into the dominant material used in the gas distribution industry. Today, over 98% of all the plastic distribution piping installed is polyethylene. In this edition of the Manual recognition is placed on the almost exclusive use of polyethylene pipe in current installations with expanded coverage of its material characteristics, pipe design factors, acceptance testing, and fusion, installation and maintenance procedures. Developments in materials, pipe and fitting technology, and installation and maintenance procedures continue to improve plastic utilization in gas distribution systems.

In recent years additional thermoplastic materials have received approvals for use in gas piping applications by their addition to ASTM D2513. These materials, which are now discussed in the Manual, include PEX (Crosslinked polyethylene) and Polyamide-11 (PA-11) piping. Other plastics installed in prior years are providing satisfying service to many users, but they are not covered in this manual.

Many aspects of design, joining, installation, operations and maintenance of plastic gas pipelines are covered in 49 CFR 192 and the AGA / ANSI Z380 Gas Piping Technology Committee's *Guide*. The role of code requirements, personnel training and inspection procedures are considered so essential that our text emphasizes them to the point of repetition. Excellent training aids, including slide presentation and videotapes, are now available from gas companies, manufacturers and trade associations.

Future revisions of this Manual will be necessitated by the dynamics of technological progress. It is the intent of the Plastic Materials Committee to periodically update this Manual.

The Committee acknowledges with appreciation the work of the Task Group responsible for these Manual revisions consisting of:

Frank Volgstadt, chairman	Volgstadt & Associates, Inc.
Stephen Boros	Plastics Pipe Institute
Richard Conley	Kerotest Manufacturing
Jim Craig	McElroy Manufacturing Company
John Goetz	Peoples Gas Light & Co
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Sudheer Pimputkar	Battelle Columbus Laboratories
Perry Sheth	Keyspan Energy
Rich Stockand	Pacific Gas & Electric

The Committee gratefully acknowledges all those who so generously contributed their data, expertise and time to publishing this edition of the Manual.

This edition of the Manual is dedicated to Larry Ingels of the American Gas Association Staff, who assisted in this timely update for the manual.

CHAPTER I

PLASTIC PIPING MATERIALS

Plastic materials used for the fabrication of pipe and fittings exhibit as broad a range of properties as those of other piping materials, including metals. The properties of a particular plastic are derived from:

- The type of polymer (e.g. polyethylene (PE), polyamide (PA), poly(vinyl chloride)(PVC), crosslinked polyethylene (PEX)).
- The structural characteristics of the polymer (e.g. average molecular length, frequency and length of branches).
- The amount and type of additives.
- The manufacturing process by which the end product is made.

For protection of properties during processing and service, and for other purposes, plastic piping materials are always formulated with additives. Some common examples are processing and ultraviolet stabilizers, pigments, antioxidants, and sometimes modifiers to enhance a property like impact strength or stiffness. It is essential when considering a plastic for an engineering application to recognize that its properties will be determined by the quality and nature of the additives as well as by the polymer or resin type.

PRIMARY CHARACTERISTICS

The primary characteristics of its widespread use in buried application include the following:

- Outstanding corrosion resistance
- Light weight
- Ease of joining and installing
- Economy

Corrosion Resistance

Plastic piping materials are not susceptible to the corrosion mechanisms that affect metallic pipe. Since plastics are nonconductors of electricity, they are immune to the electrochemical reactions caused by acids, bases, and salts that cause corrosion to metals. Plastics may be susceptible to other forms of attack such as the action of certain strong oxidizing, reducing, or other reagents that break down or alter the polymer molecules. They may absorb solvents that cause softening or weakening.

They may crack if, when under stress, they contact substances called environmental stress cracking agents. These chemicals increase a plastic's susceptibility to crack initiation and propagation.

These substances are not present in normal soils so that plastic pipe is well suited to buried applications.

Gas piping systems may sometimes contain hydrocarbon condensates which act as solvents. When plastic piping is likely to contact them or other adverse substances, selection and design should be based on the effects of the substance on both the long- and short-term strength of the material. Some important known environmental limitations are discussed later in the chapter under "Factors Affecting the Performance of Plastic Piping Materials".

Weight

Plastic pipes are significantly lighter than metal pipes. For example, polyethylene (PE) pipe weighs less than 1/6 of the weight of an equivalent sized steel pipe. Weight of plastic pipe can be calculated using the density of the plastic pipe compound, the nominal or stated diameter, and the nominal wall thickness.*

* PPI TN-7/2000, Recommended Method for Calculation of Nominal Weight of Solid Wall Plastic Pipe