

PPI Advisory Regarding Required Industry Standards and Third-Party Certification of PEX Tubing

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The Plastics Pipe Institute, Inc. (PPI) has issued an advisory regarding certain crosslinked polyethylene (PEX) tubing products being sold in Canada and USA. Based on PPI's review, these PEX tubing products may not comply with required industry standards and are not third-party certified to mandatory industry standards, despite implied claims regarding the suitability of these products for critical applications.

Major model codes require that PEX tubing products for plumbing and mechanical applications shall be marked with industry standards such as ASTM F876 and CSA B137.5 and shall be third-party certified. **The use of non-compliant, non-certified tubing in demanding plumbing and mechanical applications can lead to premature failure, property damage, and potential legal liability throughout the supply chain.**

Non-compliant and non-certified PEX tubing is marked with various tradenames and has been offered for sale via several distribution channels, including popular online retailers. The tubing is marked with industry standards ASTM F876¹ and CSA B137.5², indicating compliance with these critical standards. However, these products are not listed and labelled by third-party certification agencies to verify compliance with the mandatory industry standards.

Non-compliant and non-certified PEX tubing is being marketed and sold for applications such as potable water and hydronic heating systems, where the highest levels of compliance and performance are expected by specifiers, engineers, insurers, and building owners. Tubing that is non-compliant with industry standards or is not certified to meet these standards provides no assurance of product quality and may not perform for the intended application.

The sale, installation, or specification of non-listed materials can expose installers, retailers, distributors, and specifiers to potential legal liability if a product failure occurs. In such cases, responsibility may extend across multiple parties in the supply chain, particularly when due diligence regarding certification and compliance cannot be demonstrated. From a business perspective, the use of non-compliant materials can lead to costly consequences, including failed inspections, removal, and replacement of installed systems (i.e., rework), warranty claims, and potential damage to brand reputation. These impacts can extend beyond individual projects and affect long-term customer trust and organizational credibility.

PPI recommends that only PEX tubing which is properly third-party certified and clearly marked with the third-party certification agency logo or logos (i.e., listed and labelled) should be specified, purchased, and installed. Third-party certification records can also be found on certification agency websites and/or requested from the manufacturer or supplier of the PEX tubing.

PPI also recommends that PEX tubing lacking third-party certification markings should be treated as non-compliant and unsuitable for use in code-regulated applications. Ensuring proper certification is essential to maintaining compliance, minimizing risk, and protecting both business interests and public health and safety.

¹ ASTM F876 "Standard Specification for Crosslinked Polyethylene (PEX) Tubing" published by ASTM International, West Conshohocken, PA

² CSA B137.5 "Crosslinked polyethylene (PEX) tubing systems for pressure applications" published by CSA Group, Toronto, ON