

Plastic piping systems and the Internet by David A. Chasis

As more and more people are now turning to the Internet for instant information, it becomes critically important to identify and access the most reliable, current and user-friendly websites and Internet sources. This is especially true in the plastic piping industry. Trying to become informed using online resources can turn into an exercise of frustration and confusion, when having to navigate around the muddle of erroneous and biased content that is all too readily at hand. To remedy the situation, here is a useful list of reliable websites that are accurate, up-to-date and trustworthy.

The first two newly formed websites are comprehensive and valuable not only to engineers and installers at the technical end, but also to end-users, students, building code officials and others searching for information about plastic piping systems. The other four sites are association-created and focus on particular areas of piping materials and/or applications.

Sustainable Piping Systems

www.sustainablepipingsystems.com

This site is a combination website and blog created and maintained by Chasis Consulting. It is extensive and thorough, offering all you need to know about thermoplastic piping systems, including over 20 published articles; links to almost 100 relevant associations; a listing of over 100 product manufacturers shown by specific product groupings with direct links to two dozen; instructional CDs and workbooks; relevant engineering information, an on-site video library; a "Stump the Expert" query section; and lastly a section for comments and questions. This dynamic website/blog is updated monthly as new information becomes available.



Vinyl valves in chemical processing lines



Opus

<http://opus.mcerf.org>

Through its Mechanical Contracting Education Research Foundation, the Mechanical Contractor Association of America has created a site that includes plastic as well as other piping materials. It lists 17 piping materials (8 are plastic), 24 piping system applications and 17 pipe joining methods. The site allows you to easily research a particular piping material and/or application. You will not only get a summary of the features of the requested material and application, but also recommendations for piping material relevant to your query. This site is easy to navigate and is an excellent guide for those who are just learning about piping materials as well as for experienced engineers and installers who are receptive to adopt the latest developments in new materials and applications. A drawback to the site is that it lists only those manufacturers supporting the MCAA rather than the full roster. But using the Sustainable Piping Systems website (with its listing of over 100 product manufacturers) in conjunction with this site easily solves the issue.

International Association of Plastics Distribution www.iapd.org

This industry trade association site contains dozens of articles on plastics in general as well as plastic piping systems in particular. These are sourced from their signature and highly recognized publication, *The IAPD Magazine*. Additionally, the web user can access data on dozens of various plastics for piping as well as for sheet, rod and tubing. IAPD also offers a website specifically for pipe, valves and fittings, as well as an online search of IAPD distributors/processors and manufacturers involved in this industry segment at www.plasticpipingsystems.org.

Plastic Pipe and Fittings Association www.ppfahome.org

This site has technical and installation workbooks, videos, manuals and white papers. Conveniently, all of it is available to download. You will find information about the most commonly used plastic piping system materials for residential, commercial and industrial construction, including ABS, PVC, CPVC, PE, PEX, PP and PVDF piping systems.

Plastic Pipe Institute

www.plasticpipe.org

Everything you want to know about polyethylene piping is on this website. Also, you can access excellent technical articles about most other plastic piping materials as well. One of the most frequently used technical reports, TR-19/2007, *Chemical Resistance of Thermoplastic Piping Materials*, is shown on the site. TR-19 lists the chemical resistance capability of 10 plastics with hundreds of chemical agents.

Uni-Bell PVC Pipe Association

www.uni-bell.org

If you are designing or installing PVC underground piping, this is the definitive site. It offers over two dozen publications and videos about buried PVC piping systems. Uni-Bell also has for purchase the industry's "Bible" of underground PVC piping usage — *The Handbook of PVC Pipe*.

There are many other online sources providing data, guidance and knowledge about plastic piping systems from manufacturer websites. But for overall convenience, accuracy and reliability, the quickly accessible sites listed can't be beat. ■

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Large diameter PVC piping at Chicago aquarium