References

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Uponor involvement

Project highlights

- Six apartment buildings
- Uponor PEX Plumbing System
- Installing Contractor: Wolfe Plumbing

Products used

- 145,140 feet of Uponor AquaPEX® sized from 2" to ½"
- ProPEX® Engineered Polymer (EP) Fittings
- Milwaukee ProPEX Expansion Tools
- PEX-a Pipe Support system

Apartment complex switches from CPVC to Uponor PEX

Six new apartment buildings, originally designed for CPVC, become a PEX project and include an Uponor Logic...
When Uponor Commercial Sales Manager Stuart Lorton came across plans for six new apartment buildings with more than 360 units in Alderwood, Wash., he knew he wanted Uponor to be involved. But he quickly found that the engineering company and the developer had already specified the project CPVC trunk and branch. But as luck would have it, Ashton Wolfe, the installing contractor and owner of Wolfe Plumbing, is a strong proponent of PEX and he actually brought his concept to Lorton and Uponor to transfer the project to an Uponor homerun design.

Project Facts:

Location	Completion
Alderwood, WA, USA	2014

Building Type

Multifamily homes

Project Type

New building

Six new apartment buildings become a PEX project and include an Uponor Logic Plumbing System.

Originally designed with one 6" CPVC water main, Uponor Design Services proposed a PEX homerun plumbing system with 2" dedicated PEX lines running from the water entry to riser locations throughout the buildings. All the buildings were designed with multiple dedicated lines; each line feeding water to separate risers to distribute water to the individual water heaters in each unit throughout the buildings.

The homerun concept is somewhat new to engineers, designers and even some plumbing contractors, but the advantages of this system far outweighs the learning curve. ‘‘I was lobbying for PEX over CPVC because, over the years, I’ve found CPVC to be unreliable and difficult to work with,’’ Wolfe said.

PEX gives building owners and operators a system that is easily maintained, well balanced and allows for good isolation if future access is needed to the system. ‘‘It’s actually a fairly easy comparison,’’ he said. ‘‘Look at CPVC with its one water main and one calculation and compare it to Uponor’s homerun system, and you quickly see that PEX is easier on budgets, provide better installation times and increases overall systems performance.’’

Working closely with Uponor’s Design Services, the six buildings ended up with a total of 1.3 miles of 2" Uponor AquaPEX® piping with additional sizes from ½" to 1½" Uponor AquaPEX, ProPEX® Engineered Polymer (EP) Fittings, lead-free (LF) brass sweat adapters for large-dimensional ball valves and LF brass male threaded adapters to transition to water mains.

Lorton and his Uponor team provided training on site to ensure that the installers felt comfortable with the process of installing a homerun system. According to Jesse Smith, Wolfe’s project foreman, coordination was the largest challenge on site since the individual riser design demanded a lot of installed pipe. The Wolfe crew needed to work alongside other trades while installing the plumbing system and it was sometimes difficult to coordinate and work around them.

With any piping system installation, and especially in big projects with large amounts of pipe to be installed, speed of installation is always top of mind. Uponor provided a detailed design and layout plan and suggested the use of Uponor’s PEX-a Pipe Support rails with traditional trapeze hanger assemblies to keep the installation on track. In fact, in 25 days, the two-man Wolfe crew installed all the 2" AquaPEX — considerably faster than installing a CPVC system.

Wolfe, who has been a PEX proponent for more than a decade, is a strong ally for Lorton as he continues his work of changing hard-core traditions and old habits. ‘‘I believe it is just a matter of time before the entire industry will move to PEX, and the Uponor Design Services group is an essential instrument in my toolbox to help educate the industry on alternatives to CPVC,’’ he said.

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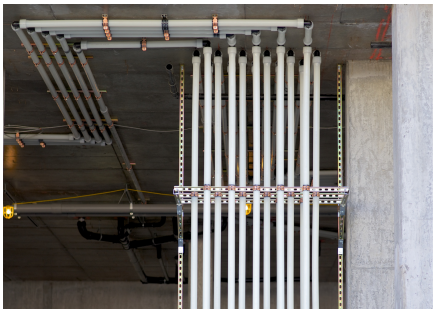



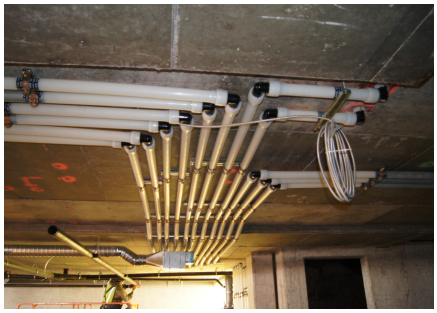

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