

Copper Piping Installation Recommendations

The City of Wadsworth Building Department wishes to notify all contractors and property owners involved in plumbing replacement or new construction that a problem may exist associated with pinholes developing in copper piping. Some may appear in a short time period after installation (1-5 years).

The failure or appearance of pinhole leaks may be due to many factors or combination of factors including:

- Low quality or low grade copper piping.
- Electrolysis created through dissimilar metals touching, stray electrical currents, or pipe to soil electrical potential.
- Oxygen cell corrosion caused by a particular combination of high oxygen content, chloride, foreign particles in the affected piping, and lack of water movement.

As a result of testing conducted on installed piping with this corrosion condition, some consistent factors regarding the location of the pinholes were determined:

- This condition is more prevalent in relatively newer homes.
- Most leaks occur in horizontal ¾ inch copper lines in basements.
- More leaks are in the cold water lines.
- Corrosion begins under a small piece of debris or foreign material inside the pipe.

Since the actual cause of the potential problem has not been determined, the City Building Department suggests using plastic piping as permitted by the Ohio Plumbing Code and the Medina Health Department. If copper is used in new construction or replacement, please follow these recommendations:

- Use a heavy grade of piping such as "L".
- Remove all burrs and blow out pipes to remove all debris.
- Thoroughly flush out the pipe after installation by running water at maximum flow rate in every branch line.
- In new homes not yet occupied, flush the pipe each day for 5 days.

Any questions relating to these recommendations should be directed to the City of Wadsworth Water Treatment Department (330-335-3002), located at 365 ½ Broad Street, Wadsworth, Ohio 44281.