Milestones in PVC Sewer Pipe History

Technology and performance have made PVC pipe the most popular choice for water and sewer lines.

1932 – First tubes were made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) in Germany.

1935 – The first PVC pipes were manufactured (Germany).

1936 – PVC pipes began to be installed for residential drinking water distribution and waste pipelines (Germany). Most are still in service.

1949 – Initial use of PVC pipe in North America.

1952 – PVC pipe introduced in the U.S.

1952 – First PVC wastewater pipes laid in the U.S.


1971 – First meeting (Oct. in Philadelphia) of the non-profit, Integral Gasketed Joint Plastic Pipe Association (re-named the Uni-Bell Plastic Pipe Association in April 1972). Headquarters were located in New York City. (We have a 7 x 10, B&W photo of the meeting.)

1972 – Original publication of ASTM D3034 - Standard Specification for Type PSM Poly(Vinyl Chloride) (PVC) Sewer Pipe and Fittings

1972 - Passage of the Water Pollution Control Act by Congress.

1976 – Uni-Bell moves to Dallas, Texas and hires full-time Director.


1977 - Passage of the Clean Water Act by Congress

1979 - Diameters available for PVC sewer pipe increase to 18 inches.
1979 - The introduction of UNI-B-6, “Recommended Practice for Low-Pressure Air Testing of Installed Sewer Pipe,” makes it possible to more quickly test the integrity of installed sewer systems in a standardized manner.

1980 - Diameters available for PVC sewer pipe increase to 21 inches.


1982 - Original publication of UNI-B-9, “Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) Profile Wall Gravity Sewer Pipe and Fittings Based on Controlled Inside Diameter (Nominal Diameters 4 - 48 Inch)”


1983 - Length of PVC sanitary collector sewer pipe grows to 30,000 miles, a ten fold increase over a ten year period. PVC share of the sanitary sewer collector market is estimated to be 80%.


1989 - Fifteen year old PVC sewer pipe tests-out like new.

1993 - PVC enters the trenchless market with a sliplining product.

1995 - Triple wall PVC sewer pipe, with a middle layer of recycled material, installed in San Diego, California.


1997 - European study of exhumed sewer pipe up to 30 years old show pipe as good as the day it was installed.

2005 – PVC is the largest volume plastic pipe material in North America with annual sales in excess of 6.8 billion pounds in 2005.

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