

What's the Risk?

Kitec Piping in Houses

Introduction

Kitec piping is the brand name of a domestic water piping system used for potable water lines and hot water heating systems in residential dwellings. This system was used between 1995 and 2007. Kitec was manufactured in Canada by Ipex Inc. under several different brand names. The Kitec plumbing system consisted of piping and fittings. The pipe is a thin layer of aluminum sandwiched between an inner and outer layer of Pex plastic. The fittings are made of brass, and the brass is composed of copper and Zinc.



What's the Risk?

During the manufacturing process Ipex added an antioxidant to the Pex piping. This was done to prevent corrosion. It is believed the antioxidant resulted in the separation of the Pex layer and eventual corrosion of the aluminum core. This caused weakening of the pipe resulting in its premature failure in some cases. The fittings were also affected by a chemical reaction called Dezincification. Dezincification accelerates the corrosion of brass fittings as zinc leaches out of the fittings. The result is a weakening of the structural integrity of the brass causing the fittings to fail.



The risk is not will the Kitec piping system fail, but rather when will it fail. All Kitec piping will eventually fail due to the reasons described. When it fails, it can lead to a water damage claim that can be very costly. Kitec is the subject of a \$125 million class action suit in Canada and the United States.

What can be done?

The only way to determine if a house has Kitec piping is to have a qualified plumber inspect the piping used in the house. If the plumber determines Kitec piping is being used, it must be replaced as soon as practicable by a qualified plumber. For more information, see the Kitec Settlement website at the following link: <http://www.kitecsettlement.com/faq.cfm>

