

Adding Value through Training

Municipalities and IPEX – PVC Training for Now and for the Future

“Everyone stresses the need for education on installation and design; in fact, operators in Ontario are required to do 40 hours of training for every three-year license cycle. We came up with a series of courses to meet those needs,” said Michael Welch, Ontario Municipal Sales. Getting accreditation to offer IPEX training as Continuing Education Units (CEU) through the Ministry of the Environment required a lengthy formal process, including approval of the presentation and the presenter.

“My thinking behind creating the courses came from a conversation with a municipality that paid \$20,000 for a course on how to tap PVC water mains,” explains Welch. “I thought: Our clients have already bought our product, and we also want to promote the product to end users. We want our clients to be happy with the installation, because then they will be happy with our product. The municipalities need the CEUs, so why don’t we offer the courses they need for free?”

The courses are delivered at a location provided by the municipality. “We can do two 4-hour sessions in one day,” says Welch, “So, half of the municipality’s employees come in the morning and the balance in the afternoon. We serve lunch for both the groups.”

Generally, attendees are municipal employees: design staff, inspectors, and operators, but sometimes the municipality will invite contractors, too. Class size varies. “We’ve had a

PVC TRAINING COURSES

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| 1 | PVC 101 – Water |
| 2 | PVC 201 – Storm |
| 3 | PVC Pipe Tapping |



group as small as 4 people,” says Welch. “In Sault Ste. Marie, we had 175 people. The city brought in all their consultants, all their contractors and all their staff. Anyone who touched a water main that year attended.” The gathering served another purpose, giving the municipality the opportunity to review the recent changes they had made to the water main specs with the people who would be most concerned with the changes.

Each of the three courses delivered by Welch and Alex Sandovski, Ontario Technical Rep, run for four hours--and there is a test at the end. **PVC 101** – Water offers training on PVC pipe and fittings for municipal water applications. **PVC 201** – Storm covers PVC pipe and fittings for municipal storm sewer applications. The third course, **PVC Pipe Tapping** is slightly different from the others that use PowerPoint slides and class exercises. The tapping course spends only about 45 to 60 minutes on theory, and for the rest of the time, the participants practice taps on PVC pipe and on FPVC/Bionax. When using Bionax, the taps are done while the service is live.

“For the tapping course, I bring along three types of water main pipe: conventional DR18, fusible DR18 and Bionax—all in 6” because that’s what fits in the minivan!” says Welch. “For the Bionax taps, we attach a hose to the pipe and pressurize it, so that the operators can learn to tap live.” The operators appreciate the opportunity to work hands-on with the product. “If you have a junior operator that’s never tapped a pipe and there are any problems, you don’t want his very first tap to be on the job. Having the chance to practise in his own back yard is a big benefit.”

“The courses are not a sales pitch. We just explain that this is what PVC pipe does and this is how to install and maintain it. We’re not selling people anything. They already use the product.” Welch adds with a smile, “But if our training can make sure that there are no problems with installation later on, they won’t have a reason to switch either.”



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