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PVC PIPE SAVINGS DOCUMENTED

WAYNE, N.J. -- Plumbing contractors can save up to 44 cents on every dollar by switching to PVC (polyvinyl chloride, or vinyl) pipe when they install plumbing systems, a study performed by a leading independent research firm shows. The same study found that PVC used in drain-waste-vent (DWV) applications can cost up to 37 cents less per dollar than competitive materials.

The study, the first of its kind to include installation and labor costs in estimating the savings advantages of PVC pipe, was conducted by IFT Technical Services, Berkeley, California.

Estimates were based on actual building costs in Atlanta, Boston, Cleveland, Houston, San Francisco and Seattle. Plumbing and DWV systems for four types of structures were evaluated: a wood frame townhouse, strip shopping center, high-rise residential building and a high-rise office building.

On average, the study found that CPVC (chlorinated PVC) pipe systems cost between 23 to 44 percent less than copper in new hot and cold water installations, according to Joseph B. Zicherman, Ph.D., president, IFT Technical Services.

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When PVC DWV was compared to cast iron soil pipe in drain, waste and vent pipe installations, the savings varied from 16 to 37 percent, he said.

"That can mean a savings of between 23 and 44 cents on every dollar spent to install hot and cold water systems and 16 to 37 cents for a typical DWV system," Zicherman said.

"This study confirms everything we have been saying about the significant cost advantages of using PVC pipe," said Roy Gottesman, executive director of the Vinyl Institute, which funded the IFT study.

PVC piping has proven to be safe, dependable and capable of meeting existing building codes, he said. Now there is concrete evidence of its superior economic performance.

"Moreover, this study doesn't even examine the total lifetime costs of the various systems and the related replacement costs. When you consider that PVC can easily outlast competitive materials, the advantages of PVC become even more obvious," Gottesman said.

PVC pipe has found broad use in plumbing applications. Because of its cost advantages and long life, pipe commands approximately three-fourths of the plastic pipe market. It is expected to maintain a strong hold on the market well into the year 2000.

The Vinyl Institute is a national trade association representing the leading manufacturers of vinyl, vinyl feedstocks, additives, and film and sheet products. Headquartered in Wayne, New Jersey, it is a division of the Society of Plastics Industry, Inc.

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Executive summaries of the study dealing with plumbing and DWV pipe are available by contacting the Vinyl Institute, 114 Mayfield Avenue, P.O. Box 3053, Edison, New Jersey 08818-3053.

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