

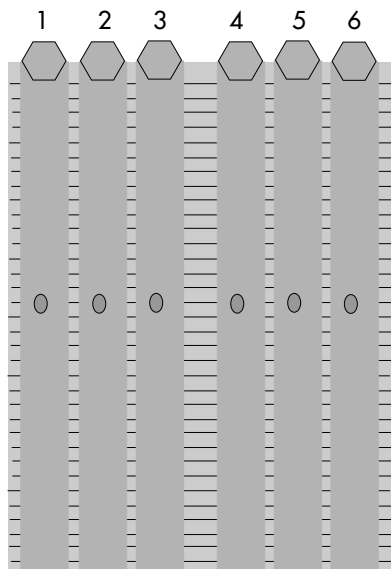


ITEMS

NEWSLETTER

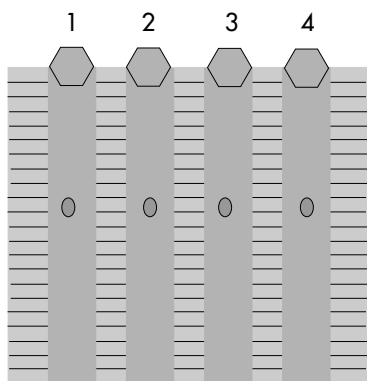
April 2006

New Installation Instructions Published for No-Hub Couplings



Small Side Large Side

5" thru 10"



Small Side Large Side

1-1/2" thru 4"

A combination of in-field experience and testing has revealed that there may be a better way to install no-hub couplings, improving the quality of the seal and decreasing the chance of leaks and other system failures.

The improvement comes from the sequence in which the clamp bolts are tightened.

Testing has revealed that if the bolts on the smaller of the two pipe ends being joined are tightened first, then the larger end tightened, the clamp bands compress the underlying shield in such a way that a tighter seal is produced.

"Plumbers have quibbled over the best way to install no-hub couplings for a long time," said AB&I's plumbing division manager, Gary Wickham, "but this new testing should put the arguments to rest."

Plumbers are encouraged to follow these new installation instructions to maximize the integrity of the coupling joints.

Installation Instructions

A properly-calibrated torque wrench, preset to 80 inch-pounds, should always be used.

1. Pipe ends should be cut square. Place the neoprene gasket on the end of one pipe and the stainless steel clamp assembly on the other end of the pipe or fitting to be joined.

2. Firmly seat both ends of the pipe/fitings against the internally molded shoulder in the center of the gasket.

3. Slide the clamp assembly into position, centered over the gasket.

4. Couplings in 1-1/2", 2", 3" and 4" sizes are three inches wide and have four sealing bands. Tighten bands to 80 inch-lbs in the following sequence (starting on the side of the joint with the smallest diameter): 2,1 - 2,1 - 3,4 - 3,4 - 2,1 - 3,4.

5. Couplings in 5", 6", 8", 10" sizes are four inches wide and have six sealing bands. Tighten bands to 80 inch-lbs in the following sequence (starting on the side with the smallest diameter): 3,2,1 - 3,2,1 - 4,5,6 - 4,5,6 - 3,2,1 - 4,5,6.

6. Once the coupling is installed and torqued to 80 inch-lbs in this torque pattern, it is not necessary to go back and retorque the coupling.

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Perspective

Question for the Day: Why Did God Make Salespeople?

I guess it's no secret that I've been in this business for a long time. When I started at AB&I, I did a stint in the foundry. My boss thought it was important that I understood the business we were in, the challenges that people who actually make our products face, and the role that everybody plays in getting quality cast iron pipe and fittings to the market. He was right. The time I spent on the foundry floor taught me a lot. It taught me what everybody's job was, and that every team member in the foundry served a specific, easily-identifiable purpose. Then I moved into sales.

During those years (the '60s), different sales managers had different views on what a salesperson's job was. Some thought it was to wine and dine customers and prospects, so that they would get to know you and, hopefully, like you more than the next guy and send you business. Others thought it was to call repeatedly on distributors so they would get used to seeing your face and, if you happened to be there at the right time, give you an order. Others thought it was to schmooze the buyers, talk sports, and pass along jokes. Behind all these theories was that there was a good ol' boy's network in the supplies business, and you had to find a way into that network if you hoped to distinguish yourself in sales.

I confess to doing all of the above in my early days in sales at AB&I. It didn't take me long, though, to realize that this sales business was a lot more than just talking up the customer. Building personal relationships has always been a focus at AB&I, but I figured out that the best relationships were those based on a combination of friendliness and utility. If I could be of real use to my buyer, imparting truly useful information about how we could make his business more profitable (while tangentially mentioning Willie Mays' 4 home run day at Candlestick last week), I would be a better contact for my buyer and my employer would smile down upon me.

As I progressed into management at AB&I, I found myself sitting on the other side of the table while salespeople called on me. I quickly learned that listening to salespeople pitch their goods or services was not a big part of my job, that I had to take time out from a very busy schedule to listen to what they had to say. Whoever

said that brevity is the soul of wit must have been a manager charged with dealing with incoming salesfolks, for it became painfully clear that chatting about sports or politics was a luxury that few managers can afford, at least for very long.

To answer my own headline question, I now know that God made salespeople so that buyers could separate out good companies from the not-so-good. Good companies train their salespeople with the same intensity they train their machine operators; that is, with a clear understanding that productivity is king and that every assignment has an end goal with a clear path to reaching that goal. Good companies train their salespeople to be information sources, to talk about their products from the buyer's point of view, and to solve problems for their customers. Good salespeople get to the point quickly, respect their customers' time, and save the small talk until the end.

Here's a tip for salespeople: The first thing you should say after "hello" when meeting a customer is, "The reason for my call is" If you cannot condense the reason for your call into a meaningful and short sentence, then you need to rethink your call. Our guys might start their call with something like, "The reason for my call is to remind you about our fractional box packaging on fittings that cuts your receiving time and labor way down so your guys can be more productive. Can you spare me ten minutes?" That took just a few seconds, but the buyer knows exactly why the salesperson is there and also knows he/she won't take too much of the buyer's time.

I've been in far too many sales presentations where the first words out of the salesperson's mouth are something like, "How 'bout them A's, eh?" The conversation is then focused on something entirely superfluous, the buyer begins thinking of ways to cut this short, and the true objective of the call is lost. Usually, the reason for the sports talk is that the salesperson has no idea what his goal is going into the call. He has not reviewed the buyer's sales figures and compared them to last year, is not aware that his buying pattern has changed, and doesn't know about the big (or not so big) job pending in his area and cannot offer any assistance in getting a piece of that job. Instead, he talks about steroids in baseball and whether there should be an asterisk in the record books next to certain players' names. See the disconnect?

Good salespeople are true professionals, not song-and-dance people or comedians. They provide a valuable service to their customers, help them build their businesses, and develop a reputation for being dependable and reliable. It may not be rocket science, but salesmanship is a skill that requires hard work and preparation. Your customers deserve nothing less.

Amen.

The distribution world is changing. Some elephants are trampling around and just who will get squished in the process is unclear. What is clear, however, is that the way plumbing products are delivered to the market is in a state of flux, and there are interesting times ahead.

Take the recent purchase of Hughes by Home Depot. There were several bidders for Hughes when it was on the block. The analysts evaluating it as an acquisition target put Hughes' share value at around \$42, but when the smoke cleared and Home Depot planted its flag over Hughes, they ended up paying about \$46. We can only assume the Home Depot guys aren't dumb, so what do they know that the rest of the market doesn't, or how do they see their ability to leverage Hughes' place in the market to their advantage?

We're not sure, but we do know that one of Home Depot's first official acts after taking over was to restructure half the senior executive staff. They clearly plan to change the business model, to do things differently.

How are you planning to deal with the changes to come? Will personal relationships and customer loyalty play as large a role in the future as it has in the past? What and where is the value going to be in the channel?

Only time will tell if the changes Home Depot plans to make will stick, or whether they will be selling Hughes to somebody else in 5-10 years at a fire sale price.

In any case, we should all be planning for the future, by answering the question, "Who is going to be selling what to whom in the years ahead?"

AB&I's 100 Year Anniversary Marks a Memorable Century

When AB&I was founded after the great 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, America was a very different place.

Most doctors never graduated from college, antibiotics were still decades away, there were few paved roads and even fewer cars, and if you were 50 years old, you were living on borrowed time. Things have certainly changed.

One remarkable way to measure the degree of that change is by looking at aviation. When AB&I got started, the Wright Brothers were building their flying machine between shifts at the bike shop. Fast forward to today. The wingspan on many modern jets is longer than that first flight at Kitty Hawk. From the Wrights hanging onto a fabric wing and steering with hands and feet just a few yards above the ground, today's pilots cruise the world in safe luxury many miles up. Instead of a novelty, aviation today is how the



average person goes on vacation and communicates with his customers and colleagues. From those first rugged days of manned flight to a safe landing on the moon and return took just seven decades.

Nowhere is this incredible pace of aviation advancement chronicled better than

at the new **Steven F. Udvar-**

Hazy Center near

Washington Dulles

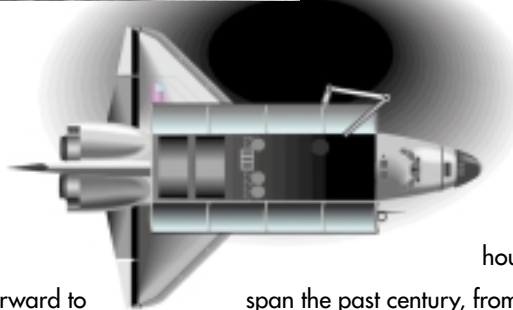
Airport. This giant

hangar facility, an

adjunct to the National

Air and Space Museum,

houses dozens of aircraft that



span the past century, from the Wright Flyer, to the

Enola Gay, to the SR-71 Blackbird, to the space shuttle

Enterprise. It's truly a spectacular museum, and really drives

home how fast aviation has progressed in just a single 100 year

span. Items readers are encouraged to take it in when in the

Washington, DC area.

Joe Sigillo Dies

The plumbing industry lost a giant recently when Joe Sigillo of Sigillo Supply passed away on April 5, 2005.

It's always tragic when a friend passes on, but with the death of Joe Sigillo the entire industry also lost an example of genuine integrity, not to mention a tremendous knowledge base.

The entire team at AB&I sends its prayers and sympathies to Joe's family and the team at Sigillo Supply.



AB&I Adds New Rep Firms

Two new manufacturer's rep firms have been added to the AB&I roster, further expanding the foundry's marketing territory:

Southern Marketing Group

3764 Burdan Cove

Memphis, TN 3818

901/547-0042

Contact: Al Rapheim, cell 901/674-0079

Territory: Tennessee, Southern Kentucky

WMK and Associates

7276 Park Bend Drive

Westerville, OH 43082

614/746-9020

Contact: Bill Kaikis

Territory: Ohio, Indiana, No. Kentucky





Reminder From AB&I

Distributors Requested to Send Web and Email Info for AB&I Website



AB&I is calling on all distributors to provide their contact information for immediate inclusion in the website at www.abifoundry.com.

"We've been planning to add a link for all our distributors," said AB&I's sales manager, Greg Seiler, "and that is now in the implementation stage."

Once complete, the AB&I website will feature telephone, fax, email and web address information for all stocking distributors throughout the AB&I marketing area. A "quick-nav" map will be included to make it easy for website visitors to find the distributors in their town or area.

The success of this program, however, depends on the distributors sending in their contact data. If you're an AB&I stocking distributor, please take a moment to email or fax your telephone, fax, email and web address to our webmaster at:

Spectrix Digital
428 Sutter Street
Jackson, CA 95642
ATTN: Kris
graphics@volcano.net

Just for Fun...



So Phyllis Diller says to Don Knotts...

If you remember the original Hollywood Squares, you'll get a kick out of these excerpts from the TV show. Peter Marshall was asking the questions, and a panel of celebrity comics would respond. If you weren't around during those years, this probably won't mean a thing to you...

Q. Do female frogs croak?

A. Paul Lynde: If you hold their little heads under water long enough.

Q. If you're going to make a parachute jump, how high should you be before you jump?

A. Charley Weaver: Three days of steady drinking should do it.

Q. True or false, a pea can last as long as 5000 years.

A. George Gobel: Boy, it sure seems that way sometimes.

Q. You've been having trouble falling asleep. Are you probably a man or a woman?

A. Don Knotts: That's what's been keeping me awake.

Q. According to Cosmo Magazine, if you meet a stranger at a party and you think that he's attractive, is it OK to come right out and ask him if he's married?

A. Rose Marie: No, wait until morning.

Q. Which of your five senses seems to diminish as you get older?

A. Charley Weaver: My sense of decency.

Q. In Hawaiian, does it take more than three words to say "I love you?"

A. Vincent Price: No, you can say it with a pineapple and a twenty.

Q. What are, "Do it," "I can help," and "I can't get enough?"

A. George Gobel: I don't know, but it's coming from the next apartment.

Q. In bowling, what's the perfect score?

A. Rose Marie: Ralph, the pin boy.

Q. If you were pregnant for two years, what would you give birth to?

A. Paul Lynde: Whatever it is, it would never be afraid of the dark.

