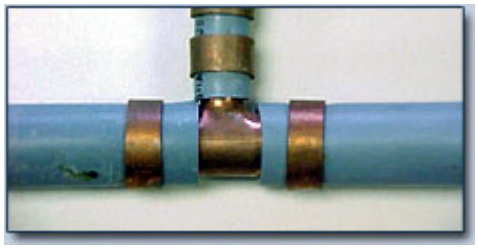
POLYBUTLYENE PIPE

One of the most renowned and significant lawsuits in the plumbing industry dealt with the replacement of the polybutylene water pipe used in the construction of millions of homes and commercial buildings in the late 70's through the mid 90's. During this period the construction industry, in many of the warmer states, was flourishing. At that time the co-polymer plastic pipe was considered to be the "pipe of the future". This "pipe of the future" was also used in many other areas of the country. Its' uses included both underground water mains and interior water distribution lines. Interior, Polybutylene pipe is easily recognized by its bluish gray or white color.



Interior Polybutylene piping systems shown with copper fittings (left) and Plastic acetal fittings (right).

Coming in from the outside this pipe will typically be attached to your main shutoff valve located close to your hot water heater. These exterior lines may be blue, gray or even black.

What causes polybutylene pipes to deteriorate can be attributed to the oxidants in the water. With the increased usage of chemicals like chlorine and other bacteria fighting ingredients significantly more failures occurred. These oxidants react with the polybutylene making it brittle and help in the development of micro cracks in the pipe. Just looking at the pipes may not give you any indication that there is a problem because the erosion and cracks start on the inside of the pipe. **Be aware, what appears to be okay, may not be!**

Failures can range in severity but once you find one leak you can be assured you will soon have more. With polybutylene it is not a question of **IF** you will have a failure but a question of **WHEN** you will have a failure. It is important that you become pro-active in your efforts to prevent failures and the damage one failure can cause.