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## **WHY THE BS EN 13476 UPDATE IS SO IMPORTANT FOR WATER INDUSTRY SPECIFIERS**

**By Caroline Ayres, BPF Pipes Group**

The new revision to BS EN 13476, published in June, has been welcomed by the BPF Pipes Group.

BS EN 13476-1:2018 covers 'Plastics piping systems for non-pressure underground drainage and sewerage – Structured-wall piping systems of unplasticised poly(vinyl chloride) (PVC-U), polypropylene (PP) and polyethylene (PE).' It supersedes BS EN 13476-1:2007, which is withdrawn. The range of pipe sizes covered has been increased from 1,200 mm to 3,000 mm; a welcome expansion in the use of structured wall plastic pipes.

Furthermore, the national foreword to the new standard has also been strengthened to clarify its scope. It makes it clear that it is applicable only to structured wall plastic piping systems made solely of PVC-U, PP and PE.

### **Why are standards important?**

UK, European and international standards exist to protect us all from products that are not fit for intended purpose. Standards assure the reliability and effectiveness of the many goods and services we use. The British Standards Institute defines a standard as: 'In essence, an agreed way of doing something. It could be about making a product, managing a process, delivering a service or supplying materials – standards can cover a huge range of activities undertaken by organisations and used by their customers. Standards are the distilled wisdom of people with expertise in their subject matter and who know the needs of the organisation they represent...Standards are knowledge. They are powerful tools that can help drive innovation and increase productivity. They can make organisations more successful and people's everyday lives easier, safer and healthier.'

**Background**

The original standard BS EN 13476 took many years to develop and involved most of Europe's plastic pipe manufacturers to ensure commonality across the whole industry when it came to ensuring the quality, reliability and longevity of the product.

The standard covers structured wall pipe systems made from one of three materials: HDPE, PP or PVC-U. The test methods and pass/fail criteria detailed under BS EN 13476 have been carefully chosen, evaluated and agreed to ensure long-term performance of pipes made from each of these materials. For this reason, the standard is not suitable for pipes made from other materials (plastic or other), combinations of materials (composites) or pipe systems outside of the definition in the standard. The BPF Pipes Group and its members strongly advise that compliance with BS EN 13476 is verified by a third party certification scheme (for example, the BSI Kitemark).

Innovation and development are important and to that end, the BPF Pipes Group is working with the European Standards Committee responsible for BS EN 13476 to further encourage the use of recycled materials for these products. Test methods and factory quality control need to be robust and agreed across the industry to safeguard the excellent performance of these products to date.

**How important is it to have compliance with a recognised industry standard?**

The water industry, essential to managing our water supply and waste water every day, and the products and services used therein are no different. Compliance with applicable standards ensures that customers can be safe in the knowledge that the products will be fit for purpose. As the original BS EN 13476 standard was specifically written for structured wall pipe systems, it is appropriate that the new update emphasises that it only applies to a clearly defined set of products. It means that those specifying plastic pipe products in the water industry can be reassured that only products carrying a Kitemark (or equivalent third party certification mark) to the BS EN 13476 standard are in compliance.

By focusing on 'best value' rather than 'cheapest', organisations can secure long-term asset reliability.

See more at <http://www.bfppipesgroup.com/>

ENDS

PHOTO-CAPTION: Conformity with the correct standard brings clarity for those specifying plastic pipes

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**About the BPF Pipes Group**

Part of the British Plastics Federation, the BPF Pipes Group is a trade association representing manufacturers and material suppliers of plastic piping systems across the UK. Committed to sustainable construction, its aims are to provide a forum for the exchange of technical expertise between member companies and to promote the importance of plastic as a pipework material, for the full spectrum of above and below ground, pressure and non-pressure applications. It also plays a key role in initiating and disseminating research and informing and influencing the standards bodies pertaining to plastic pipe systems. It works closely with the BPF and TEPFPA, the European Plastic Pipes and Fittings Association.