

Leaks in Driscopipe® 8000 Pipes Attributed to Plastic Contamination

In April 2006 Performance Pipe issued a letter to their Driscopipe® 8000 customers advising them that we had received a small number of complaints of leaks in Driscopipe® 8000 that we determined to be attributable to contamination of plastic (primarily nylon) in the polyethylene pipe wall. A copy of the letter follows.

Since the letter was issued, we have received a small number of additional reports of detected leaks that have been attributed to slow crack growth initiating at the site of the contamination in the polyethylene pipe wall. There have been no reports of incidents or major leaks. Further, there have been no reports of leaks attributed to contamination in tubing sizes ($\leq 1\text{-}1/4\text{'')$).

Identifying Driscopipe® 8000 Pipes

Driscopipe® 8000 pipes were produced from late 1979 through 1997 by Phillips Products Company, a subsidiary of Phillips Chemical Company which was later called Phillips Driscopipe, Inc. In some areas of the country, sales continued for a few years after production stopped. The pipes were produced from Marlex® M-8000 compounded black resin produced by Phillips Chemical Company. In some cases utilities referred to the pipes as 'M8000 pipe' or '8000 pipe'.

Driscopipe® 8000 pipes were solid black PE3408 pipes with burnished gloss surface with a yellow print line. The pipe was available in sizes from 1/4" through 8" diameter. Figure 1 is an example of the exterior appearance of a leak formed due to contamination.

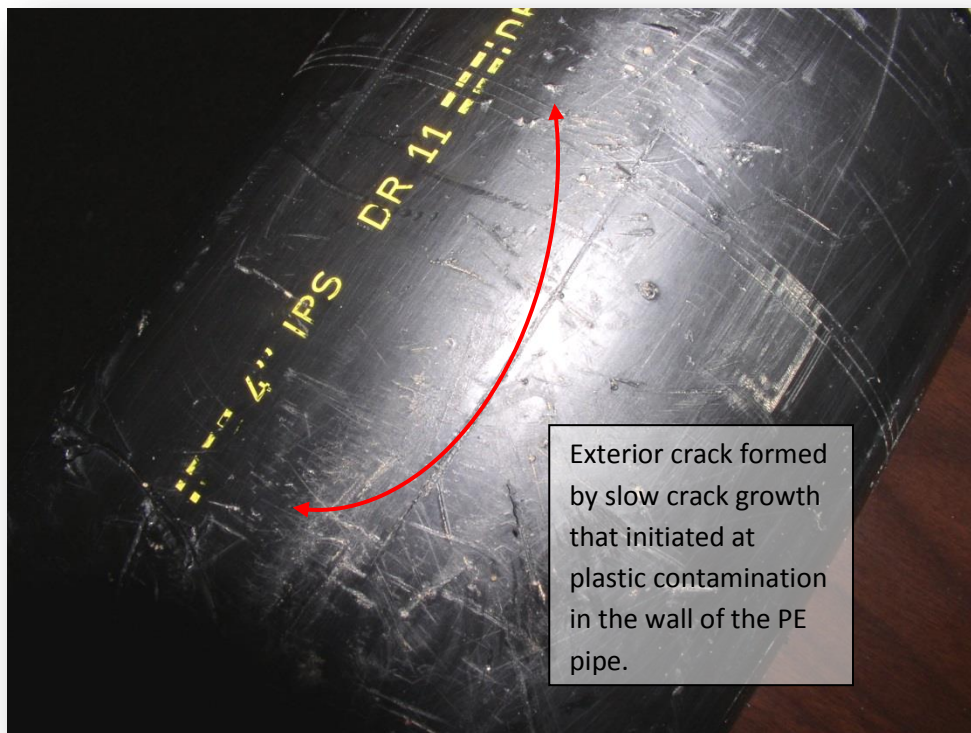


Figure 1
Example of a leak that formed due to contamination of the polyethylene pipe

What to do if Contamination is suspected?

If a leak has been found, determining if the leak was caused by plastic contamination is done visually by a microscopic inspection of the fracture surface. The plastic contaminant will appear as a film in the interior of the pipe wall thickness. Leaks can be detected through leak surveys.

Can Contamination occur in current pipe production?

Unlike Driscopipe® 8000 production, Performance Pipe current gas pipe production practices include procedures to ensure that contaminants are not introduced into the pipe extrusion stream. In addition to procedures, Performance Pipe has also implemented fine mesh melt filters on each extrusion line to screen out any items that are not fully molten. Performance Pipe has also implemented state of the art flaw detection to further assure that contaminants are not inadvertently introduced to the pipe extrusion stream.



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Dear []

Performance Pipe, a division of Chevron Phillips Chemical Company LP, has been a provider of products and services to the gas distribution industry for over 40 years. The quality of our products is our foremost priority. Any quality issues in gas piping systems, no matter how infrequent, are appropriately investigated and addressed. In this regard, we are asking for your assistance.

Our records indicate that you were a purchaser or user of Driscopipe® 8000 series pipe. Driscopipe® 8000, a premier line of polyethylene pipe and tubing, was manufactured and widely sold for gas distribution applications from 1979 through 1999 by Phillips Driscopipe, Inc., a then wholly owned subsidiary of Phillips Chemical Company.

Over the past two years, Chevron Phillips Chemical Company LP has investigated reports of leaks in Driscopipe® 8000 pipe and confirmed a minute number of cases in which a trace contaminate, polyamide (nylon), contributed to the leak.

If you have experienced slit-like failures with Driscopipe® 8000 pipe either: (1) in frequencies greater than those you have experienced with similar polyethylene pipe or (2) for which you could not determine a cause, please contact us immediately. Your assistance in this regard is greatly appreciated.

Our investigation has not found any systemic cause for the trace polyamide (nylon) contamination, nor have we identified a source of this nylon present at the pipe manufacturing sites, or elsewhere. We are continuing to investigate the source of the trace contamination.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you are aware of any leaks meeting the criteria specified above, please contact your local Performance Pipe Territory Sales Manager or the undersigned.

Regards,

Karen Lively, P.E.