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UCLA Wasserman Eye



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Project highlights

- 16,000 feet of 5/8" Wirsbo hePEX™ pipe
- Architect: Richard Meier and Partners, Los Angeles
- Mechanical Contractor: Circulating Air, Los Angeles
- System: Radiant Heating and Cooling from Uponor
- LEED®-Silver certified

Products used

- Wirsbo hePEX™ pipe
- ProPEX EP fittings

LEED® certified healthcare facility features Uponor

Learn how Uponor provided the radiant heating and cooling system to this LEED®-Silver certified healthcare facility...
The Wasserman Eye Research Center is a culmination of a 50-year vision to house a world-class research and care center on the UCLA campus to preserve and restore eyesight. With offices in New York and Los Angeles, renowned architectural firm Richard Meier & Partners Architects designed the six-story, 100,000-square-foot Edie and Lew Wasserman building. Completed in April 2013, the three lower floors are dedicated to the expansion of the Jules Stein Eye Institute, making it a world-class research and treatment facility.

To accommodate for the Wasserman building, a plan was developed to demolish a seismically deficient portion of the adjacent Semel Institute building. Lead architect Michael Palladino was the principle-in-charge and Tom Goffigon, the project manager, worked closely with the Wasserman Foundation, overseeing the demolition project and design and construction of the new building. With a keen eye to detail, the architects kept sustainability top-of-mind. In fact, the University of California system recently became the first American university to have 100 LEED®-certified facilities – an impressive milestone and a testament to the university system's dedication to responsible building practices.

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The Wasserman Eye Research Center uses a four-man crew to install 16,000 feet of Uponor's Wirsbo hePEX™ pipe

Radiant system takes load off forced air

The first three floors were specified to include radiant heating and cooling, and Uponor was asked to help with design and product guidance. Working closely with Circulating Air, a Los Angeles-based mechanical contractor, Uponor helped design the system in conjunction with engineers and architects.

"The contractor had not worked with Uponor prior to this project so we helped them get trained and comfortable with our system on site," said Jacob Ford of Keyline Sales, a local Uponor rep firm. "It didn't take long for them to catch on, and they quickly advanced and found innovative methods to speed up installation."

According to Ford, the building's southern facing is a wall of glass, and the radiant heating and cooling system takes a huge load off the forced air system.

The four-man Circulating Air crew worked closely with Keyline Sales to ensure they installed the 16,000 feet of Uponor's Wirsbo hePEX™ pipe efficiently.

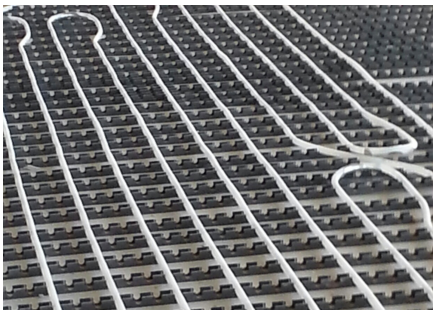
"We were truly amazed at how quickly and easily we installed the piping for the radiant heating and cooling system," Matt Fitzgerald, Circulating Air job foreman, said. "Receiving training on site really helped us, and our crew felt up-to-speed very quickly." Also, Fitzgerald said that prior to training he was unaware how easy it was to make the connections to the manifolds and fittings. "I love how fast and easy the system is," he said.

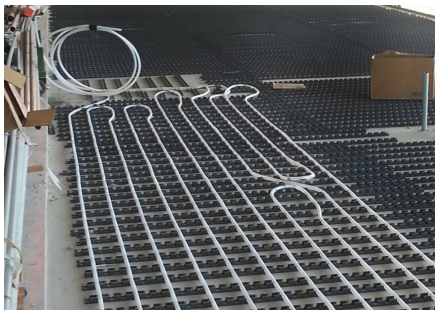
Uponor's Wirsbo hePEX pipe uses ProPEX® expansion fittings which require one simple expander tool to make fast, easy connections that hold tight with up to 1,000 pounds of radial force. For contractors familiar with traditional copper or other rigid pipe connections, the ProPEX fitting system is a much easier, more reliable connection method.

The system hooked up to six manifolds and six cabinets divided between the three lower floors. "The installation was fairly straight forward," Fitzgerald said. "And we didn't encounter any obstacles that we couldn't overcome."

UCLA Wasserman Eye Research Center









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Uponor Infra Oy

Uponor Infra Oy
Uponor Suomi Oy
Kouvolantie 365, 15550 Nastola
Kappelinmäentie 240, 65370 Vaasa

Puhelin +358 20 129 211
Sähköposti
asiakaspalvelu.fi@georgfischer.com
W www.uponor.com