



## **Plumbing Foundation Hosts Webinars on Gas Laws for Plumbers, Engineers, and Building Owners**

In February, the Plumbing Foundation held a three-part legal and regulatory webinar series each focused on how New York City gas laws impact a particular sector of the industry: licensed plumbers, professional engineers, and building owners and managers.

In 2016, a series of local laws established new regulatory oversight and mandatory inspections for natural gas systems across NYC. Since most of those laws have come into effect over the past year, the Plumbing Foundation is often asked about the new requirements. These webinars hosted panels of experts who discussed these requirements in detail and covered specific stakeholder obligations and risk of non-compliance to local laws specific to natural gas systems, obligations under the new laws, regulatory enforcement by the NYS Department of Public Service (DPS) and the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB), detailed information on staggered mandatory inspection due dates as determined by Community Board number across all five boroughs, roles and responsibilities of public utilities, and the responsibilities of Licensed Master Plumbers and Professional Engineers and knowing when each is required.

Our expert panelists comprised representatives from the NYC DOB, Con Edison, National Grid, Northeast Gas Association, Clarity Testing Services, City Calibration, and Rudin Management, as well as experienced licensed plumbers and professional engineers, including from The PAR Group, Jaros Baum & Bolles, and the American Society of Plumbing Engineers (ASPE) of NYC.

Our webinars were recorded and placed on our website ([plumbingfoundation.nyc](http://plumbingfoundation.nyc)) for a limited time, but if people would like free access to one or all three after the limited runs have expired, please email us at [info@plumbingfoundation.nyc](mailto:info@plumbingfoundation.nyc).

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE: Minor Plan Changes Require a Post Approval Amendment**

The NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) issued a notice that beginning March 15, 2021 any jobs with minor plan changes must be submitted as a Post Approval Amendment (PAA).

- For BIS Jobs: an AI1 form for minor plan changes cannot be submitted in eFiling for jobs after approval unless it is submitted as a Post Approval Amendment (PAA). Submit a PW1 with an AI1 Additional Information form that specifies the submission is part of a PAA and identifies the plan changes. Upload the new plans in eFiling and select New PAA. Include in the comments section the reason for the PAA and circle the information that has changed on the plans. Include a description of the changes in the Comments section of the PW1. Once the PAA status is PAA Fee Due, pay the fee in eFiling using the Express Cashier Payments module. For professional certification jobs, upload a completed PW1 form that indicates Okay for Approval in eFiling and select Approval for PAA. For resubmission of a standard plan review job, submit in eFiling as Minor Plan Change/PAA.
- For DOB NOW Jobs: an AI1 for minor plan changes cannot be submitted to the DOB help form for jobs after approval. Submit a Post Approval Amendment (PAA) in DOB NOW. Upload as a single PDF a full plan set and include an AI1: Additional Information form as the last page that specifies that the submission is part of a PAA and identifies the plan changes. Include a description of the changes in the Comments section of the Plans/Work tab (PW1).

For more information, please reference the NYC DOB service notice:  
[www1.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/pdf/minor\\_plan\\_changes\\_sn.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/pdf/minor_plan_changes_sn.pdf)

*Zoning and Construction Codes Requirements*  
**PLASTIC VENT PIPING FOR CATEGORY IV  
APPLIANCES**

## HIGHLIGHTS

The 2014 NYC Fuel Gas Code does not allow the use of any Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) pipe for gas venting appliances. However, Chlorinated Polyvinyl Chloride (CPVC) pipe that is listed is permitted for venting of Category IV appliances.



PHOTO SOURCE: Discolored unlisted PVC Vent for Category IV Boiler

## BACKGROUND

### What are Category IV appliances?

Category IV appliances are condensing, high efficiency appliances, such as water heaters and furnaces for example, whose vent systems are usually constructed of polypropylene, CPVC, or stainless steel piping.

### What type of pipe materials that are no longer allowed?

Due to a code modification from the 2008 NYC Fuel Gas Code (FGC) to the 2014 NYC FGC, the following are no longer allowed for venting Category IV appliances:

- All PVC pipe (both listed and unlisted)
- Unlisted CPVC pipe

### Why are PVCs and unlisted CPVC pipes not allowed in Category IV appliances?

PVC and unlisted CPVC pipes have been shown to fail through discoloration and melting when subjected to high temperatures associated with Category IV appliances.

### What is allowed for venting Category IV appliances?

Listed CPVC pipe

Consult with your Architect or Engineer about this Code revision as it applies to your scope of work.

Read [Buildings Bulletin 2021-001](#) for more details on the requirements.

Send questions to [constructioncodes@buildings.nyc.gov](mailto:constructioncodes@buildings.nyc.gov).





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# The Plumbing Foundation testifies in support of Intro No. 1576 at Committee on Environmental Protection Hearing

On Tuesday, February 16, 2021, Terence O'Brien, Senior Director of the Plumbing Foundation, testified virtually at the NYC Council Committee on Environmental Protection Hearing in support of Intro. No. 1576, which proposes to increase the penalties imposed on owners failing to comply with the mandatory installation of and reporting requirements for backflow prevention devices.

"Backflow" occurs when drinking water is contaminated by hazardous substances. It happens when street pressure pushes water into buildings where dangerous materials and chemicals may exist, and no device prevents that now contaminated water from re-entering the drinking water supply. Sometimes water flow can be reversed due to a water main break or a mistaken or accidental cross connection between the building's water distribution and drainage systems. Therefore, it is vital that buildings install and maintain backflow prevention devices to prevent the harmful results of contaminated water, which can contain bacteria like E. coli and Salmonella.

Senior Director O'Brien urged the passage of Intro. No. 1576 to properly incentivize compliance with the law. The NYC Administrative Code currently allows first-time fines to be imposed anywhere from \$50–\$1,000 for violation of the requirement to install a backflow device. Such fines do not provide enough of an incentive for owners to comply with the law. In a former Council hearing, the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) clarified that the Department fines building owners \$500–\$5,000.\* In contrast, a backflow device itself can cost up to \$20,000. This is why the industry believes fines should be increased, so that owners do not continue merely paying the lower fine but rather comply with the law and actually install the required devices.

Mr. O'Brien testified that Intro. No. 1576 provides a real method to address the problem as outlined above for penalizing noncompliance. It would increase the monetary penalties to be imposed on a building owner or operator who fails to comply with installation and reporting requirements for backflow prevention devices.

The installation of backflow prevention devices is a public health priority. It is apparent that the understanding of and compliance with backflow prevention is still an issue at large in the City. Steep fines must be imposed on owners who fail to comply with the law in order to properly incentivize compliance.

*\*Hearing on Intro. No. 821, Committee on Environmental Protection, The New York City Council (Oct. 30, 2017).*

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## Site Safety Training 40-Hour Requirement in Full Effect

The NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) issued a reminder that beginning March 1, 2021 construction and demolition workers at job sites with a Construction Superintendent, Site Safety Coordinator, or Site Safety Manager must have a Site Safety Training (SST) Card issued by a DOB-approved course provider. In consideration of the additional time it may take between completion of the training and when the SST Card is printed and issued, a printout of the front of the SST Card, issued by a DOB-approved course provider, will be acceptable proof a worker is trained for a period of 60 days from issuance. Digital SST Cards connected to an interactive and secure application will also be acceptable. New entrants to the construction and demolition workforce can begin working at the above sites after obtaining a Temporary SST Card from a DOB-approved course provider. A Temporary SST Card can be obtained upon completion of an OSHA 10-Hour course and is valid for six months from the date of issuance while the worker obtains the remaining 30 hours of training.

For more information, please reference the NYC DOB service notice:

**[www1.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/pdf/ll\\_196\\_0321\\_sn.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/pdf/ll_196_0321_sn.pdf)**

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## Local Law 152 of 2016: Extensions for CDs 1, 3, 10

As a reminder, the NYC Council adopted a law (Local Law 12 of 2021) extending the due date for compliance with Local Law 152/2016 building gas system inspections for buildings in Community Districts 1, 3, and 10 from December 31, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

For more information and the updated schedule of inspections, please visit the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) website:

[www1.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/pdf/ll152\\_deadline\\_extension\\_sn.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/pdf/ll152_deadline_extension_sn.pdf)

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## Gas Explosion in Bronx Likely Result of Illegal Plumbing Work

On Thursday, February 18, 2021, a gas explosion in the Bronx led to 10 injured people, 6 of whom were children, and forced a mother to throw her baby out of her second-story window to a neighbor. The incident occurred at 1522 Paulding Avenue.

“This is another unfortunate reminder of how illegal gas connections can result in horrific consequences. Only licensed master plumbers are legally permitted to safely install natural gas connections. That is why we are aggressively educating building owners, managers, engineers and plumbers on how to inspect gas lines in compliance with current laws, and we are fully supportive of the city’s efforts to crack down on illegal connections” said April McIver, Executive Director.

The Plumbing Foundation commends the first responders, the NYC Department of Buildings, and the utility company for responding to the explosion in a timely manner, as well as the Red Cross for relocating the families impacted by the explosion. The NYC DOB reported that gas lines, water pipes, and laundry equipment were illegally installed in a ground-floor garage of the building and that the work was performed without proper permits. The property owner has been issued violations for such illegal work.

### THE PLUMBING FOUNDATION’S ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Since its establishment in 1986, the Plumbing Foundation has worked diligently to ensure the plumbing industry has as little a “carbon footprint” on New York City as possible. The plumbing industry has historically utilized environmentally friendly materials such as recycled cast-iron and copper piping/fittings. The Foundation will continue in its role of protecting New York City as well as being an advocate for the environment by strengthening its water/sanitary regulations and thereby reducing wasteful water consumption in the City.

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## Excavator Beware

Dig safely around natural gas lines

Whether you operate heavy equipment or use handheld tools, when you dig, you risk contacting natural gas pipelines. Use these tips to stay safe:

- **Notify 811 well in advance** of digging or moving earth in any way – even for small jobs.
- **Respect the locate marks** and follow them when digging.
- **Dig with care** in the vicinity of underground natural gas pipelines.
- **If you find an unmarked or mismarked line**, stop digging and notify **811**.
- **Report any suspicious activity near a natural gas pipeline marker.**
- **Don't rely on your nose alone.** Be alert for the many warning signs of a natural gas leak.
- **Know what to do** if your equipment contacts a natural gas pipeline.

To report a gas emergency, **call 911 and National Grid** immediately.

### Massachusetts

911 and 1-800-233-5325

### Rhode Island

911 and 1-800-640-1595

### New York

Long Island and the Rockaways: 911 and 1-800-490-0045

Metro NY: 911 and 1-718-643-4050

Upstate NY: 911 and 1-800-892-2345

For additional safety information and materials, visit **ngridsafety.com** and connect with us on



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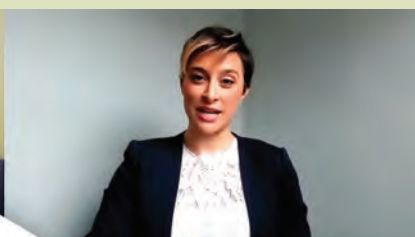
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