



**CLARIFICATION/ENFORCEMENT MEMO**  
**Community Development Department**  
**Building Division**  
**447-8437**

**Date:** June 29, 2009

**From:** Kimberley Mack, AIA  
Senior Plans Examiner  
City of Helena Building Division

**Enforcement effective date: Immediately**

**Subject: Use of Contrasting Colored Solvent on Plastic Pipes or Building Sewer Testing**

**Applicable Code:** 2006 ed. – Uniform Plumbing Code

Section 103.5.3 - Testing of System:

“All plumbing systems shall be tested and approved as required by this code or the Authority Having Jurisdiction.”

Section 316.1.6 – Solvent Cement Plastic Pipe Joints:

“Plastic pipe and fittings designed to be joined by solvent cementing shall comply with appropriate IAPMO Installation Standards.”

and Section 723 - Building Sewer Test.

“Building sewers shall be tested by plugging the end of the building sewer at its joints of connection with the public sewer or private sewage disposal system and completely filling the building sewer with water from the lowest to the highest point thereof, or by approved equivalent low-pressure air test. The building sewer shall be watertight at all points.”

The testing and approval of a buildings sewer system is essential in the overall health of the building and its occupants. The Uniform Plumbing Code specifies the materials and methods of joining pipes, how testing is to be done and when it is required. The City of Helena Building Division is obligated to enforce these provisions of the code.

To facilitate the inspection process, ‘substantial compliance’ may be obtained by Plumbing Contractors through the use of a contrasting colored solvent on all plastic pipe joints in lieu of performing a water ‘head’ test on the building sewer and drainage piping. It shall remain at the discretion of the Building Official, based upon recommendation from the Plumbing Inspector, to require that a water head test still be performed if there are indications the test is necessary to determine the water tightness of the system.

*City of Helena, Montana*