

Quality vs Price

Not all of the PVC fittings in the marketplace are equal! Just as there are many products that have professional and retail versions, so it is with PVC fittings. Yet many times it is hard to distinguish between the versions of PVC pipe and fittings available. As a professional whose livelihood and reputation depend on providing quality to your customers, you must rely on quality products.

Although all PVC fittings look very much alike, there are some easy methods to spot the quality or professional grade product from the rest of the pack. The manufacturer of a fitting has a lot at stake if the fitting that you install is substandard and results in a failure. For this reason, industry standards and accreditations have been established. The multitude of specifications, processes, testing, and identifications required for responsible manufacturers are time-consuming and costly. Yet, the result is a product that they, and you, can rest assured will perform as expected.

With the throng of internet sellers and the big-box outlets offering PVC fittings, there is always a fraction of those more interested in the sale, than the quality. This is not to say that quality product is not available from these sources, but it behooves the installer to know what they are buying and using. In some instances, the seller offering the lowest price product has little or no concern for its quality. History has shown that most wholesale distributors will only sell PVC fittings from established and reliable manufacturers who will stand behind their product quality.

In the recent past, there have been incidences of non-domestic fittings which have been sold, installed, failed and resulted in expensive litigation. Such as Gray PVC fittings that are inaccurately advertised or promoted as Schedule 80, or heavy duty. Just because a fitting is Gray does not make it heavy duty or Schedule 80. There are specific ASTM standards defining the material, dimensions, inspection, testing criteria, and marking required on a compliant product. Those same standards also require a 3rd party verification of compliance, most commonly the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF). Each compliant fitting must have permanent markings identifying the manufacturer, the applicable ASTM standard, material (i.e. PVC or CPVC), and size.

It is not unheard of for a non-compliant look-alike product to be sold with all the markings but not to be verified, or listed by the independent laboratory. These are products that can result in failures and losses. If there is ever a concern as to whether the manufacturer of a PVC fitting is acceptable, www.NSF.org is a good place to start. Every item verified by NSF will be listed by the manufacturer. Not all of a manufacturer's products may be listed, and those not listed are most likely not in compliance with the ASTM specifications.

The wholesale distribution dealers in your area are generally the best source for PVC pipe and fitting products by which you can stake your reputation.