

Copper is the 1st choice for UK contractors

A recent survey conducted on behalf of the UK Copper Board has revealed what contractors look for most in a plumbing pipework material and which plumbing material ticks the most boxes. The results of the survey clearly show that copper still has the top spot in materials specification.

Contractors were asked to put a score against a number of performance criteria and then evaluate both copper and plastics.

Copper came out on top for:

- ✓ Reliability
- ✓ Availability of products
- ✓ Durability
- ✓ Proven technology
- ✓ Heat, pressure and fire resistance
- ✓ Flow rates
- ✓ Recyclability.

This clearly shows that important criteria for contractors relate to the performance of the material.

Reliability – The contractors considered that 'reliability' was the most important attribute for a plumbing material and copper easily outscored plastics. With a proven track record of many years behind it, copper is seen to be the most reliable plumbing pipework material.

Availability of products – Next in the ranking of criteria was 'availability of products' and again copper outscored plastics. Copper tube and

fittings are manufactured to European Standards, ensuring a series of standardised sizes. This means that tube and fittings from a number of different manufacturers can be used in a single system. Plumbers merchants all over the UK will stock at least one manufacturer's copper tube and copper fittings.

Durability – Contractors know that copper is a durable material, it can even take a few knocks without compromising the performance.

Proven technology – The jointing techniques available for copper - capillary, compression, push-fit and press - are all well established in the industry and the vast majority of contractors will have been taught the 'copper way' in college.

Heat, pressure and fire resistance – The strength of copper, even when used as a thin-walled tube, enables it to withstand high pressures and the melting point of 1083°C means that it is capable of operating at high temperatures. The 200°-300°C in a solar thermal system presents no problem.

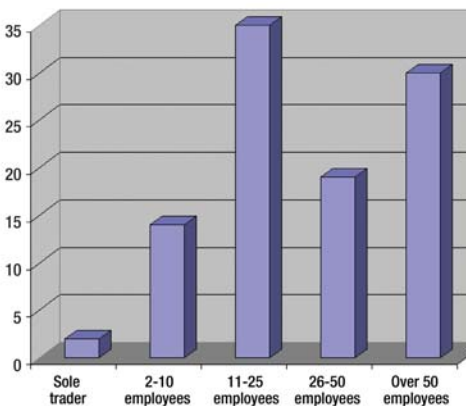
Flow rates and recyclability – The thin wall of a copper tube means that, for a plastic pipe of a similar OD, the bore of the copper tube is larger, and can carry more water/gas.

| Outside diameter | Wall thickness | Max. operating pressure |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 15mm | 0.7mm | 58bar |
| 22mm | 0.9mm | 51bar |
| 28mm | 0.9mm | 40bar |
| 35mm | 1.2mm | 42bar |
| Half-hard copper tube | | |

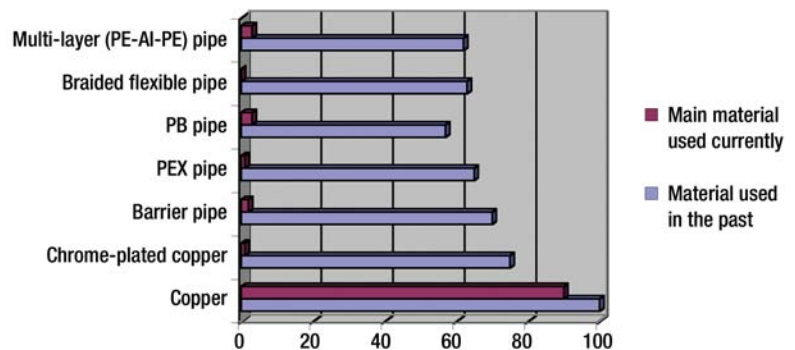
The recyclability of copper is well known to plumbing contractors. Copper is 100% recyclable, with no loss in properties. With more and more emphasis being put on sustainability of construction projects, the obvious green credentials of copper are becoming more important to specifiers and contractors.

The contractors

The survey group consisted of 100 contractors, drawn from all around the UK and of various sizes, from sole-traders to large contractors employing 50+ operatives.



The contractors had, for the most part, used a variety of pipework materials in their work and had worked on commercial, domestic, new-build and local authority contracts.



"It's (copper) the most common product used nowadays"
"It's (copper) the main thing that's asked for by the client"

Contractors know what's important in a pipework material, and they know that copper provides the quality solution.

For more information go to www.ukcopperboard.co.uk

