

Fuel Safety Bulletin

2013-05

Dated: December 10, 2013

Subject: Underground Gas Piping identification

Clause: 6.15.14 in CSA B149.1 *Plastic piping or tubing shall be accompanied by a tracing wire or other electronically detectable tracing media.*

Tracing wire is also known as locating wire or locator wire because it is used to locate non-conductive (plastic) underground pipe after it has been buried. When laying PE pipe in the ground, tracer wire is buried alongside the pipe and if the line needs to be reached for repair or maintenance a wire tracer or above ground wire detector is used to locate the non-energized pipe.

The tracer wire must be kept physically close to the pipe. This minimizes damage during installation and ensures locating the wire effectively and accurately locates the pipe. It is recommended that the wire is taped to the pipe every 4 to 6 feet with at least 3 overlapping wraps of a standard PVC electrical tape.

The strength and characteristics of the tracer wire chosen can have a huge impact on the life expectancy of the tracer wire system. Generally, it must be minimum AWG 12 solid wire with 0.030" of PE insulation. It is often recommended that the insulation is yellow to further comply with the international color codes for buried utility marking, although this is often not available.

The jacket of the tracer wire must be protected and be **watertight** over its entire buried length. Any moisture getting in contact with the wire will cause corrosion and eventual failure of the tracer wire. When installing the pipe, proper attention must be paid to the installation method and equipment to avoid jacket damage. Splices in the tracer wire must be kept watertight and maintain a reasonable physical strength.

NOTE: The Mylar "tracer tape" used on some older underground propane piping installations is **NOT** designed to be electronically detectable and must never be used on plastic underground gas piping installations.

For any questions or concerns regarding this Bulletin, please contact me at our Halifax offices.

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