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A JOINT STATEMENT BY THE  
**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS**  
AND THE  
**UNITED ASSOCIATION OF PLUMBERS,  
FITTERS, WELDERS AND HVAC SERVICE TECHS**

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## Protecting the Public, Environment, Workers, and Fire Fighters

The American Labor Movement has always stood in the forefront in advocating for worker and public safety. Reducing safety in model plumbing codes negatively impacts the health and safety of the public, construction workers and first responders. During fire events, first responders and building occupants suffer increased health risks from toxic smoke and gases.

All buildings should require the installation of safe, recyclable, non-combustible, and sustainable piping materials for plumbing systems to protect the health and safety of first responders, building occupants and the environment.

The Model Plumbing Codes barred plastic plumbing pipes from high rise buildings for decades but have been weakened by special interests which jeopardizes health and safety. Cancer rates amongst fire fighters have dramatically increased due to exposure to toxins from plastics and other building materials used in construction.

Although plastic piping (PVC, CPVC, ABS) is appropriate for some uses, the codes should prohibit the installation of plastic piping for drain, waste, and vent (DWV) plumbing in hotels and residential buildings greater than two stories in height.

It should also prohibit plastic pipe in critical patient occupancies such as hospitals, nursing facilities, high rise residential structures, and healthcare facilities.

Plastic pipe not only emits toxic gases when burned, but requires more complex firestopping systems in fire-rated construction than non-combustible pipes. If improperly installed and/or inspected, these systems allow fire to spread more easily.

Plastic water piping also leaches hydrocarbons and chemicals into drinking water. A recent analysis of the many plastic pipe material variations (PE, PEX, HDPE, PP, CPVC and PVC) identified 163 leachable substances and 74 of these are not understood or regulated.

Off gassing from plastics and the adhesives used with plastic piping pose long term health risks to workers exposed to these products during construction and to the occupants of these buildings.

Alternatives that are noncombustible, sustainable, durable, and recyclable should be considered in lieu of plastic materials.

*The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) represents over 310,000 professional fire fighters, fire officers and EMS Providers across North America.*

*The United Association of Plumbers, Fitters, Welders and HVAC Service Technicians (UA) represents over 350,000 members engaged in the plumbing and pipefitting industry.*

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