Standard Practice for
Heat Fusion Joining of Polyethylene Pipe and Fittings

This standard is issued under the fixed designation F 2620; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (e) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice describes procedures for making joints with polyethylene (PE) pipe and fittings by means of heat fusion joining in, but not limited to, a field environment. Other suitable heat fusion joining procedures are available from various sources including pipe and fitting manufacturers. This standard does not purport to address all possible heat fusion joining procedures, or to preclude the use of qualified procedures developed by other parties that have been proved to produce reliable heat fusion joints.

1.2 The parameters and procedures are applicable only to joining polyethylene pipe and fittings of related polymer chemistry. They are intended for PE fuel gas pipe per Specification D 2513 and PE potable water, sewer and industrial pipe manufactured per Specification F 714, Specification D 3035, and AWWA C901 and C906. Consult with the pipe manufacturers to make sure they approve this procedure for the pipe to be joined (see Appendix X1).

NOTE 1—Information about polyethylene pipe and fittings that have related polymer chemistry is presented in Plastics Pipe Institute (PPI) TR-33 and TR-41.

1.3 Parts that are within the dimensional tolerances given in present ASTM specifications are required to produce sound joints between polyethylene pipe and fittings when using the joining techniques described in this practice.

1.4 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.5 The text of this practice references notes, footnotes, and appendixes which provide explanatory material. These notes and footnotes (excluding those in tables and figures) shall not be considered as requirements of the practice.

1.6 This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

D 2513 Specification for Thermoplastic Gas Pressure Pipe, Tubing, and Fittings
D 2737 Specification for Polyethylene (PE) Plastic Tubing
D 3035 Specification for Polyethylene (PE) Plastic Pipe (DR-PR) Based on Controlled Outside Diameter
D 3261 Specification for Butt Heat Fusion Polyethylene (PE) Plastic Fittings for Polyethylene (PE) Plastic Pipe and Tubing
F 714 Specification for Polyethylene (PE) Plastic Pipe (SDR-PR) Based on Outside Diameter
F 905 Practice for Qualification of Polyethylene Saddle-Fused Joints
F 1056 Specification for Socket Fusion Tools for Use in Socket Fusion Joining Polyethylene Pipe or Tubing and Fittings

2.2 PPI Documents:

TR-33 Generic Butt Fusion Joining Procedure for Field Joining of Polyethylene³
TR-41 Generic Saddle Fusion Joining Procedure for Polyethylene Gas Piping³

2.3 AWWA Documents:

AWWA C901 Standard for Polyethylene (PE) Pressure Pipe and Tubing, ½ in. (13 mm) through 3 in. (76 mm), for Water Service⁴
AWWA C906 Standard for Polyethylene (PE) Pressure Pipe and Fittings, 4 in. (100 mm) through 63 in. (1575 mm), for Water Distribution and Transmission⁴

3. Summary of Practice

3.1 The principle of heat fusion joining of polyethylene (PE) pipe is to heat two prepared surfaces to a designated temperature, then fuse them together by application of a
sufficient force. This force causes the melted materials to flow and mix, thereby resulting in fusion.

3.2 The heat-fusion procedures covered in this practice are socket fusion, butt fusion, and saddle fusion.

3.2.1 Procedure 1, Socket Fusion—The socket-fusion procedure involves simultaneously heating the outside surface of a pipe end and the inside of a fitting socket, which is sized to be smaller than the smallest outside diameter of the pipe. After the proper melt has been generated at each face to be mated, the two components are joined by inserting one component into the other. See Fig. 1. The fusion bond is formed at the interface resulting from the interference fit. The melts from the two components flow together and fuse as the joint cools. Optional alignment devices are used to hold the pipe and socket fitting in longitudinal alignment during the joining process; especially with pipe sizes IPS 3 in. (89 mm) and larger. Automated socket fusion is not addressed in this procedure.

3.2.2 Procedure 2, Butt Fusion—The butt-fusion procedure in its simplest form consists of heating the squared ends of two pipes, a pipe and a fitting, or two fittings, by holding them against a heated plate, removing the heater plate when the proper melt is obtained, promptly bringing the ends together, and allowing the joint to cool while maintaining the appropriate applied force.

3.2.2.1 An appropriately sized butt fusion machine is used to clamp, align and face the pipe or fitting ends and to apply the specified fusion force. See Fig. 2.

3.2.3 Procedure 3, Saddle Fusion—The saddle-fusion procedure involves melting the concave surface of the base of a saddle fitting, while simultaneously melting a matching pattern on the surface of the pipe, bringing the two melted surfaces together and allowing the joint to cool while maintaining the appropriate applied force. See Fig. 3.

3.2.3.1 An appropriately sized saddle fusion machine is used to clamp the pipe main and the fitting, align the parts and apply the specified fusion force.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 The procedures described in Sections 7-9 are primarily intended for (but not limited to) field joining of polyethylene (PE) pipe and fittings, using suitable equipment and appropriate environmental control procedures. When properly implemented, strong pressure/leak-tight joints are produced. When these joints are destructively tested, the failure occurs outside the fusion joined area.

4.2 Melt characteristics, average molecular weight and molecular weight distribution are influential factors in establishing suitable fusion parameters; therefore, consider the manufacturer's instructions in the use or development of a specific fusion procedure. See Annex A1.

4.3 The socket fusion, butt fusion, and saddle fusion procedures in this practice are suitable for joining PE gas pipe and fittings, PE water pipe and fittings, and PE general purpose pipes and fittings made to PE product specifications from organizations such as ASTM, AWWA, API, and ISO that are used in pressure, low pressure and non-pressure applications. For gas applications, qualification of the procedure by testing joints made using the procedure in accordance with regulations from the authority having jurisdiction are required.

5. Operator Experience

5.1 Skill and knowledge on the part of the operator are required to obtain a good quality joint. This skill and knowledge is obtained by making joints in accordance with proven procedures under the guidance of skilled operators. Evaluate operator proficiency by testing sample joints.
5.2 The party responsible for the joining of polyethylene pipe and fittings shall ensure that detailed procedures developed in conjunction with applicable codes and regulations and the manufacturers of the pipe, fittings, and joining equipment involved, including the safety precautions to be followed, are issued before actual joining operations begin.

6. Apparatus—General Recommendations

6.1 Heating Tool—Electric heating tools come in a variety of sizes that match the fusion machines capabilities. They are designed with enough wattage and electronic control to maintain the specified heater face temperature required in this