PIPE HEATING CABLE
COMMON QUESTIONS

Q: Do I need to insulate over your pipe cable?
A: YES!!! The cable will not keep the pipes from freezing if insulation is not properly installed. You should insulate the pipe and cable with 1-1/2" of fiberglass pipe insulation for maximum effectiveness. A properly installed and insulated cable will keep a pipe from freezing at -50° F.

Q: Why do you recommend only fiberglass insulation?
A: Fiberglass insulation has good insulating properties as well as the ability to withstand high temperatures. We have no way of knowing the insulating properties of all the various types of foam-based insulation's on the market. Some may have a high enough "R" value to allow the heating cable to work properly. You are also limited in insulation thickness to the thickness of the foam wall. Typically 3/8 or ½ inch. Fiberglass insulation allows you to add as many layers as needed to achieve the 1 ½ inch thickness. In addition, the inside diameter of the foam insulation is sized to fit the pipe. Adding a pipe cable will cause a gap along the seam in the foam insulation. Also, many of the foam insulation's are not designed to withstand temperature and could pose a potential hazard should the cable overheat.

Q: My pipes are frozen. Can I use pipe heating cables to thaw them out?
A: NO. Pipe cables are designed to ***prevent*** freezing. They do not generate enough heat to thaw a pipe that is already frozen.

Q: I put my hand on the cable and I can't feel any heat. Why?
A: The cable only gets to between 70 & 100° F when it is operating. Depending on where it is located, inside or outside. This is about the same or lower then your body temperature. So no heat will be felt.

Q: Can the Wrap-On pipe cable be used on plastic pipes?
A: YES! Our cable is tested for use on all rigid plastic pipe, including schedule 40 PVC, the most common type of plastic used in the US. As long as the pipe is rated for 140° F or above, our cable can be used.

Q: I plugged your cable in and the light doesn't come on. Why?
A: The light won't turn on until the air temperature is below 38° F, which is the point at which the thermostat will turn on the cable.

Q: At what temperature does the thermostat close (go on) and open (go off)?
A: As the temperature lowers, the thermostat closes at about 38° F. As the temperature rises, the thermostat will open at about 45° F.

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Q: The light on my cable comes on when the temperature is…("over 40°, over 50°, etc.). Is this a problem?

A: Normally, the cable should not turn on until the air temperature is below 38° F. If your light is coming on at higher temperatures, your cable is turning on to soon. It is designed for continuous operation so there is no danger to having it on too soon. You may want to leave the cable unplugged until the temperatures starts getting to around 40° F.

Q: How can I check to see if the cable works?

A: Look at the clear thermostat pod where the power cord meets the flat colored heating portion of the cable. If the thermostat has a bright orange button, testing is easy. Leaving the cable coiled, plug it in and gently press the orange button until the light on the thermostat comes on. Hold the coiled cable in your other hand and continue to depress the orange button for several minutes until you feel the cable begin to heat up. Unplug the cable and proceed with the installation as per the instructions. If your thermostat doesn't have a button, you can still test the cable using the following method. Leaving the cable coiled as it comes in the box, put it in the freezer for about 30 minutes. Remove the cable from the freezer and **immediately** plug it in. The light on the thermostat should come on. If the cable is already installed, you can take a plastic bag filled with ice and wrap it around the thermostat pod. This should cool it down enough to turn the cable (and light) on.

Q: How can I test the cable to be certain there is no break in the wire?

A: You can check to be sure you have a complete circuit by performing a continuity test. You will need an Ohm meter to conduct this test. Following the instructions included with the Ohm meter for a continuity test, place one lead from the meter on each of the flat blades of the plug from the pipe cable (be certain to completely disconnect it from the power supply first). If your Ohm meter indicates continuity, your cable is unbroken. If the test indicates there is no continuity, there is a break in the wire and the cable must be replaced.

Q: What are the advantages of wrapping the cable around the pipe vs. straight along the bottom as Easy Heat does?

A: Wrapping the cable around the pipe provides more even heat distribution throughout the pipe. This allows our cable to operate at lower wattage, saving you money on operating costs, while still protecting your pipes to 50° F below zero. Also a straight line installation is very difficult to do because while you are trying to install it the weight of the cable keeps wanting to pull it away from the pipe.

Q: Wouldn't it be better to have the thermostat sense the temperature of the pipe like Easy Heat instead of sensing air temperature?

A: Probably not, after all, it's the temperature in the space around the pipe that will cause the pipe to freeze.

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Q: My pipe runs outside (or in a barn near animals), can I use your pipe cables?
A: Yes, but you must take steps to keep the insulation dry. Wet insulation is like no insulation at all. After installing the cable and insulation as per the instructions, simply snap a piece of stove pipe (or other rigid piping) around the installation to protect it. Be sure to size the outer pipe large enough to leave several inches of space between the insulation and the outer pipe. Failure to leave sufficient airspace inside the outer pipe can cause the pipe cable to overheat.

Q: Can the pipe cable be used on flexible piping?
A: Yes, as long as the pipe is properly supported to prevent excessive flexing or movement.

Q: Can the cable be used on a drain or waste line?
A: We don't recommend this. Our cable is designed for use on pipes which are always filled with water. Use of a pipe cable on a drain line may lead to overheating the cable as there is often no water in the pipe to act as a heat sink.

Q: Can your cable be used to heat 55 gallon drum (metal tank, etc.)?
A: No. Our cable is designed only for heating water pipes 1" or less in diameter. In fact, they do not produce enough heat to protect a drum or tank. You should call Chromalox at 615-848-2560. They specialize in industrial/commercial heat cable applications.