

Eddy's Boilerhouse News

TIP OF THE MONTH FOR THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

By Eddy Emerson

Does that missing pipe insulation need to be replaced?

I am often asked if it is important to replace that missing pipe insulation. The answer to that question is *yes*. Now the answer can be *no*, if you have more money than you know what to do with. If you have a lot of stock in the local utility company, that is supplying your gas or oil, the answer could also be *no*. But, for of us poor folks who haven't seen any real green backs in years the answer is get that insulation back on that pipe today.

Using the chart below we can roughly calculate the heat loss of a six inch steam line with only two foot of insulation missing. Let's say that the steam in the line is at 100 psi. Steam at 100 psi is about 350 degrees F. If the boiler room is 100 degrees F then we would have a temperature difference of 250 degrees F. Looking at the chart we can see that 250 degrees F difference gives us a heat loss of 1,000 btu's per square foot per hour. This six inch piece of pipe with two foot of insulation missing has 3.47 sq. ft. of bare pipe. This means we have a heat loss of 3,470 btu's per hour or 83,280 btu's loss per day.

Valves and other fittings that are not insulated have the same kind of heat loss. Insulation will always pay for itself in a short period of time.

Watch out for asbestos when dealing with older pipe (ugly stuff when it gets in your lungs).

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