

viega

Leading Biotech Company Project Profile

CUSTOMER: Leading Biotech Company
APPLICATION: Research & Development facility
LOCATION: Cambridge, MA
CONTRACTOR: O'Keefe Plumbing & Heating

Viega ProPress® stainless system saved thousands of dollars in time and labor at biotech R&D facility

“I won't groove any pipe that's four inches or less if I don't have to.”

One of the world's leading biotechnology companies recently engaged O'Keefe Plumbing & Heating to retrofit the piping at its New England research and development facility. O'Keefe, which is located in Danvers, MA, has been doing installation/retrofit work for the biotech firm for 25 years.

O'Keefe Plumbing & Heating specializes in projects for the biotech/pharmaceutical industry. The contractor also handles commercial/industrial, hospital and medical gases, process piping and specialized waste applications.

On this project, O'Keefe ran pipe from a new process chiller to a condenser water loop, which is used to cool equipment such as autoclaves, glass washing machines and steam generators. “The condenser water loop is located on the top floor of a six-story building,” said Larry O'Keefe, president of the 34-year-old company. “We installed 4" stainless steel pipe



branching out to each of the floors. We ran at least 1,500 feet of stainless pipe up and down those six stories.”

According to O'Keefe, the customer typically runs nitrogen, compressed air, CO₂, oxygen and some mixed gases through its piping. “We used Viega ProPress stainless on the 25,000-square-foot renovation and it worked quite well,” he said. “We're now using it on all of their gas piping. In the past, that piping had always been brazed. Now, the water lines—the gas lines—everything is pressed.”

Compared to brazing and grooving, Viega's ProPress stainless system provides more speed, safety and reliability while enhancing the overall quality of the installation. The system—consisting of stainless steel fittings, valves and pipe—uses Viega's patented Smart Connect® feature to identify unpressed connections during pressure testing.

The contractor had previous experience with Viega's pressing technology at the biotech company. “We did some Viega ProPress stainless at the customer's co-generation facility in the basement of one of their buildings,” explained O'Keefe. “They generate their own steam and some electricity there. We also previously installed a water softening system and did a heat reclamation project off their air compressor using Viega ProPress stainless.”





“On the stainless project, the sizes ranged from 1-1/2" up to 4”,” he continued. “They were going to be pressed either way, whether we used copper or stainless. I proposed the Viega ProPress system to the facilities engineer and he agreed to it. He was delighted with the results. We saved thousands of dollars by using Viega ProPress stainless.”

There were other pipe joining options available to the contractor. “One option was soldering 4" copper pipe, which is extremely time consuming,” said O’Keefe. “It can also be problematic, especially if there are leaks. The other alternative was grooving, which also takes a lot of time.”

“Given a choice between Viega ProPress or grooving, there’s not even a question,” O’Keefe stated. “It’s Viega ProPress. I won’t groove any pipe that’s 4" or less if I don’t have to.”



“The Viega ProPress system is labor saving,” he said. “It takes less time and less equipment than grooving. If you’re grooving a 4" 90 pipe, you cut the pipe, prep it and put it in the groover. You have to tighten the clamps and bolts and then groove the pipe. By the time you do all that, you’re looking at one hour to an hour-and-a-quarter in labor time.”

“With pressing, you cut two ends of pipe, smooth it with a grinder, assemble the fitting and press it—all in about 15 minutes. Usually, the time and labor savings of pressing will wash out the cost of the press fittings.”

“It’s the same with soldering,” O’Keefe said. “It takes less time to press than it does to solder. Plus, with soldering, you need two guys to solder one fitting. Somebody always has to stand on fire watch. With the Viega ProPress system, everybody’s being productive.”

“The guys in the field just love Viega ProPress,” he emphasized. “They even whine a little when they have to take their torches out for projects that require brazing.”

Stainless steel also gets high marks for its appearance. “Everybody likes the look of Viega ProPress stainless,” said O’Keefe. “It’s pretty impressive when you see it and it’s done right. People hate to cover it up. Unfortunately, most of the time we have to insulate it.”

O’Keefe admits he was initially skeptical when he heard about pressing. “When I first learned of it, I was a little reluctant. Back then, it was bit cost prohibitive for the smaller sizes of press fittings. It took me a while to become a believer but I certainly am now.”

“I do believe Viega ProPress for stainless sets us apart from other contractors,” O’Keefe said. “Viega has a good product and we’ve had the opportunity to introduce it in some biotech/ pharmaceutical environments where others may not have had that chance.”

For more information on Viega ProPress stainless, visit www.TheTorchIsPast.com or call toll free: 866.766.7805.