

Small Investment, Large Profits

ZoomLock Flame-Free Refrigerant Fittings ensure a clean, leak-free system even in freezing temperatures

When you work in the low temperature refrigeration, you're always dealing with water below the freezing point — and ice creates its own problems.

Standard, brazed fittings sometimes come apart due to moisture. The fitting may not ever leak, but if there's a pinhole left from brazing, moisture can get in there and create the leak by expanding the copper or crushing the pipe.

Mike Kempel, president of Dakota Refrigeration, Inc. in Fargo, N.D. has seen this time and time again. When he was introduced to ZoomLock Flame-Free Refrigerant Fittings at a Parker Sporlan Contractor Advisory Council meeting in 2015, he was excited, to say the least.

"If ice has a path to leave and doesn't become trapped or encapsulated, it'll just freeze out that direction," Kempel says.

ZoomLock Flame-Free Refrigerant Fittings have been thoroughly tested in freeze/thaw applications with more than 10,000 cycles completed in both vertical and horizontal configurations with no leakage concerns.

"We decided that with Parker Sporlan standing behind this — they've been in the business for a long time, making fittings for a long time — that we would try it," Kempel says. "It seems to work. Because, so far we haven't had any issues."

HVACR Business spoke with Kempel about the challenges and advantages of ZoomLock Flame-Free Refrigerant Fittings.

How did you first begin using ZoomLock?

ZoomLock was introduced to us by our Sporlan field rep at a Contractor's Advisory Council meeting. Of course we had a lot of questions ... such as, is it going to collect moisture and freeze and just not work. Which is not the case. We thought we'd try it first on a small walk-in. The job went so fast that we decided to try it on something else.

MIKE KEMPEL

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FOLLOW UP: Looking for an innovative and simple solution to save time and ensure a clean system on jobs? Learn about how the ZoomLock Flame-Free Refrigerant Fitting is truly a game-changer for refrigeration applications. Visit zoomlock.com.

BUSINESS INSIGHTS: Fittings is brought to you by Parker Hannifin — Sporlan Division



How much time do you save, on average?

We've done two relatively small supermarkets using ZoomLock, and we saved two weeks of labor for a crew of four men. We complete the job faster and we can use a lesser skilled technician. We don't need a full-blown pipefitter to braze the connections. The fittings cost a little more than standard fittings, but the time savings alone is worth it.

What's the advantage of not relying on your pipefitter to braze every connection?

Our pipefitter can do more jobs by spending his time laying out the piping diagram. And you can take a younger tech, who doesn't have much experience with such things as slope and size, and give them a list of what pipes to put where, and they can do that. And then they can complete the joint. That's the best part. They're not simply sticking things together and waiting for a guy to come by and braze them. ZoomLock allows them to actually put them together, complete the connection, insulate it and be done.

Is the investment worth the time savings?

The investment is really small if you think about how much additional profit you're making. The investment in brazing equipment would probably be a little less. But the ongoing consumables — brazing stick, oxygen acetylene and silver are very costly. That's all part of the process, but may not be considered. With ZoomLock, there's nothing but the tool ... and that's a one-time cost.

What's the biggest challenge with using ZoomLock?

The only challenge is to get more of our customers on board ... making them understand the safety and reliability advantages of the product. If it's not specified, they're sometimes reluctant to change specs because they don't want to be the first one to make a mistake. But, there is a bigger benefit to not brazing, because you're not weakening the copper by heating it. You're not creating any possible oxides. Those are some of the things we need to get through to our customers — the benefits of ZoomLock Flame-Free Refrigerant Fittings versus what they're using right now.

What's the biggest advantage for them?

They're guaranteed a clean system. There won't be any callbacks, because there is no oxide in the pipes caused by improper purging. Typically, you can purge and purge and purge, and yet, somehow you'll still get some black stuff in the pipes and the screens, or loose solder balls in the pipes from putting too much solder in the system. You have none of those problems with ZoomLock, so you won't have to send a technician back to the jobsite weeks later to clean the system again. ♦