

## Product Information Bulletin

### PlastiSpan HD Hydronic Insulation for Radiant Floor Heating Systems

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Conventional forced air heating systems rely upon convection to force hot air towards the ceiling resulting in non-uniform heat distribution throughout the room area. With radiant floor heating systems, there are no vents blowing air into specific areas. The hydronic tubing cast into the concrete slab and PlastiSpan HD hydronic insulation beneath the concrete slab ensures that heat is spread uniformly throughout the entire floor area.

In radiant floor heating systems, hot water is circulated through hydronic tubing to keep all slab areas warm. PlastiSpan HD hydronic insulation board is installed on a prepared ground surface as the first component in the radiant floor heating system to ensure that heat loss will be minimized and the entire floor area will be warmed faster.

PlastiSpan HD hydronic insulation incorporates support grooves for the hydronic tubing. The supports ensure that hydronic tubing is held in position until the concrete floor is placed.

Radiant heating systems can also be used in a variety of other applications. Examples would be beneath exterior concrete slabs on walkways or driveways for melting snow and ice or beneath the concrete slab of your garage floor to keep your garage warm all year round.

The advantages of radiant floor heating systems using PlastiSpan HD hydronic insulation include:

- Provides monolithic insulation layer to ensure uniform heat distribution.
- Floor area will be noticeably warmer to anyone standing on it.
- Insulation installs quickly and easily with no special skills, tools or equipment required.
- Mechanical attachment of hydronic tubing is typically not required.
- Energy efficient method of constructing a heated basement floor slab.



PlastiSpan HD hydronic insulation is an expanded polystyrene (EPS) insulation used as the insulation component in radiant floor heating systems. PlastiSpan HD hydronic insulation decreases heat loss to ground, allows uniform heat distribution to the floor area above and ensures the floor area will be warmed faster.

The closed cellular structure of PlastiSpan HD hydronic board provides excellent resistance to moisture. In addition, the “long-term” thermal resistance (LTTR) is not subject to thermal drift as is the case with other foam plastic insulations such as extruded polystyrene (XPS) or polyisocyanurate insulation, which are manufactured with blowing agents intended to be retained in the cellular for greater than 180 days. See Plasti-Fab Product Information Bulletin 241 for additional information on LTTR of foam plastic insulation.

Table 1 provides PlastiSpan HD hydronic insulation material properties as per the National Standard of Canada, CAN/ULC-S701, **Standard for Thermal Insulation, Polystyrene, Boards and Pipe Covering**. Typical thicknesses are also provided, however, custom thickness based upon the thermal resistance value required for specific applications are available.

**Table 1 – PlastiSpan HD Hydronic Insulation Material Properties**

Material Property	ASTM Test Method	Units	Values <sup>1</sup>
<b>Thermal Resistance</b> <i>Minimum RSI per 25 mm (R per inch)</i>	C518	m <sup>2</sup> ·°C/W (ft <sup>2</sup> ·h·°F/BTU)	0.70 (4.04)
<b>Compressive Resistance</b> <i>Minimum @ 10% Deformation</i>	D1621	kPa (psi)	110 (16)
<b>Flexural Strength</b> <i>Minimum</i>	C203	kPa (psi)	240 (35)
<b>Water Vapour Permeance<sup>2</sup></b> <i>Maximum</i>	E96	ng/(Pa·s·m <sup>2</sup> ) (Perms)	200 (3.5)
<b>Water Absorption<sup>3</sup></b> <i>Maximum</i>	D2842	% By volume	4.0
<b>Dimensional Stability</b> <i>Maximum, 7 Days @ 70 ± 2°C (158 ± 4°F)</i>	D2126	% Linear Change	1.5
<b>Limiting Oxygen Index</b> <i>Minimum</i>	D2863	%	24
Typical Dimensions			
Width – mm (feet)	Length – mm (feet)	Thickness – mm (inches)	
1,220 (4)	1,220 (4)	38, 51, 76 or 102 (1-½, 2, 3 or 4)	

1. PlastiSpan HD insulation properties are third party certified under a certification program administered by Intertek and listed by the Canadian Construction Materials Centre (CCMC) under evaluation listing number 12425-L (Type 2).  
 2. WVP values quoted are maximum values for 25-mm thick samples with natural skins intact. Lower values will result for thicker materials.  
 3. The water absorption laboratory test method involves complete submersion under a head of water for 96 hours. The water absorption value above is applicable to specific end-use design requirements only to the extent that the end-use conditions are similar to test method requirements.

### Canadian Codes – Energy Efficiency Requirements

Division B, Part 9, Section 9.36 of the National Building Code of Canada 2010 (NBC 2010), 2012 British Columbia Building Code (2012 BCBC) and 2014 Alberta Building Code (2014 ABC) provides energy efficiency requirements for buildings 3 storeys or less in building height, having a building area not exceeding 600 m<sup>2</sup> and used for major occupancies classified as residential occupancies. Table 2 provides minimum **effective thermal resistance (RSI<sub>eff</sub>/R<sub>eff</sub>)** requirements as per NBC 2010, 2012 BCBC, 2014 ABC, Tables 9.36.2.8.A. and 9.36.2.8.B. for heated slabs below grade or in contact with the ground.

**Table 2 – Minimum RSI<sub>eff</sub>/R<sub>eff</sub> for Below-Grade Heated Floors in Contact with Ground**

Climate Zones	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7a	Zone 7b	Zone 8
Heating Degree-Days (HDD) Celsius Degree-Days	< 3,000	3,000 to 3,999	4,000 to 4,999	5,000 to 5,999	6,000 to 6,999	≥ 7,000
RSI - m <sup>2</sup> •°C/W	2.32	2.32	2.32	2.84	2.84	2.84
R-value - ft <sup>2</sup> •hr•°F/BTU	13.2	13.2	13.2	16.1	16.1	16.1

Table 3 provides annual heating degree days and applicable climate zones for a number of building locations in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba as per NBC 2010, 2012 BCBC and 2014 ABC, Division B, Appendix C.

**Table 3 - Annual HDD (Celsius Degree Days) for Building Locations**

Location	HDD	Zone	Location	HDD	Zone	Location	HDD	Zone
<b>British Columbia</b>			<b>Alberta</b>			Saskatoon	5700	7a
Victoria	2650	4	Lethbridge	4500	6	Yorkton	6000	7b
Abbotsford	2860	4	Medicine Hat	4540	6	Prince Albert	6100	7b
Vancouver	2950	4	High River	4900	6	Hudson Bay	6280	7b
Comox	3100	5	Calgary	5000	7a	Nipawin	6300	7b
Kelowna	3400	5	Edmonton	5120	7a	Uranium City	7500	8
Kamloops	3450	5	Grande Prairie	5790	7a	<b>Manitoba</b>		
Whistler	4180	6	Athabasca	6000	7b	Morden	5400	7a
Cranbrook	4400	5	Peace River	6050	7b	Winnipeg	5670	7a
Prince George	4720	6	Fort McMurray	6250	7b	Steinbach	5700	7a
Smithers	5040	7a	Fort Chipewyan	7100	8	Swan River	6100	7b
Mackenzie	5550	7a	Rainbow Lake	7200	8	Flin Flon	6440	7b
Fort St. John	5750	7a	<b>Saskatchewan</b>			The Pas	6480	7b
Dease Lake	6730	7b	Moose Jaw	5170	7a	Thompson	7600	8
Fort Nelson	6710	7b	Regina	5600	7a	Churchill	8950	8

RSI<sub>eff</sub>/R<sub>eff</sub> of building assemblies calculated using the formula below includes the effect of the thermal bridging effect due to repetitive structural members such as wood framing members in walls.

$$RSI_{eff} (R_{eff}) = \frac{100\%}{\frac{\% \text{ Area of Framing}}{RSI_F(R_F)} + \frac{\% \text{ Area of Cavity}}{RSI_C(R_C)}} + RSI(R) \text{ Continuous Material Layers}$$

Heat loss through an un-insulated basement slab can be a significant source of energy loss in a heated basement. Installing PlastiSpan HD hydronic insulation reduces heat loss and ensures more uniform more floor surface temperature.

Tables 4 and 5 provides examples of basement slab construction using PlastiSpan HD hydronic insulation installed as a continuous insulation layer beneath the basement slab to meet minimum **RSI<sub>eff</sub>/R<sub>eff</sub>** requirements as per Table 2. Because PlastiSpan HD hydronic insulation is installed beneath the heated basement slab, the insulation is installed as a continuous layer. The calculation below does not include the additional RSI/R that would be added for any floor finishes.

**Table 4 – RSI<sub>eff</sub> (R<sub>eff</sub>) Calculation - Climate Zones 4, 5 and 6**

System Description	RSI <sub>eff</sub>	R <sub>eff</sub>
Horizontal Air Film (above floor)	0.16	0.9
102 mm (4") Concrete Slab	0.04	0.2
76 mm (3") PlastiSpan HD Hydronic Insulation	2.13	12.1
Polyethylene moisture barrier	----	----
<b>Total Effective Thermal Resistance</b>	<b>RSI-2.33</b>	<b>R-13.2</b>

**Table 5 – RSI<sub>eff</sub> (R<sub>eff</sub>) Calculation - Climate Zones 7a, 7b and 8**

System Description	RSI <sub>eff</sub>	R <sub>eff</sub>
Horizontal Air Film (above floor)	0.16	0.9
102 mm (4") Concrete Slab	0.04	0.2
102 mm (4") PlastiSpan HD Hydronic Insulation	2.84	16.2
Polyethylene moisture barrier	----	----
<b>Total Effective Thermal Resistance</b>	<b>RSI-3.04</b>	<b>R-17.3</b>