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July 6th 2009 ~ Monday Morning Minutes:

Handling the Condensate from Condensing Boilers

In past Monday Morning Minutes we introduced the materials of selection and saving operating costs with great turndown ratios. Today our attention is turned to the installation of condensing boilers and handling of the condensate.

A quick way to determine just how well your condensing boiler system is saving the owner money is to go out on a shoulder day, say when it's 50°F outside. Take a look at the boiler condensate drain and see just how much condensate is coming out. By definition, condensing boilers save the most money when they are condensing. If there's not much water, the owner is most likely not taking full advantage of his boiler plant. If there is a lot of condensate coming out, you know the owner is saving some good money. Every drop of condensate that leaves the boiler is a savings.

How do we deal with all that money-saving condensate? Keep in mind that the condensate is acidic, usually around 3-4pH level. This acidic condensate will eat through a copper line in a matter of months, not years. Because of this, R.L. Deppmann recommends the use of PVC drain piping.

R.L. Deppmann also recommends that a neutralization kit be installed with every condensing boiler and/or water heater. An example of such a kit is the Con-Dor Condensate Neutralization Kit. This unit will utilize calcium carbonate to neutralize the acid, raising the pH level to 7 so that it can be safely discharged to drain.

In next week's issue, we will discuss the various means of venting condensing boilers and water heaters.

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