

ASK DR. GALV

Q. Dear Dr. Galv: Do galvanized pipes qualify for carrying drinking water and can potable water tanks be made of galvanized steel?

A. This question is frequently asked by designers of building systems and new plants. The American Water Works Association (AWWA) Standard D-103-87 allows the use of galvanized steel for water storage tanks. The confusion about the qualification of galvanized pipes and potable water tanks is that the EPA has delegated the responsibility for testing materials to be used in drinking water systems to the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF).

The certification program for materials was issued by this organization through a number of test procedures. The tests are designed to check for potentially adverse human health effects from products added to drinking water directly or indirectly during storage, transmission or treatment.

At the present time the standard for material qualification, NSF STD 61, does not include galvanized steel as one of the generically accepted materials.

This is not because galvanized parts are not acceptable, but rather because there have not been tests conducted by NSF on galvanized parts submitted by "the industry".

There is an up-to-date list of those materials and manufacturers who comply with NSF STD 61 available by contacting the AGA offices by phone at 303-750-2900 or by FAX 303-750-2909.

Drinking water systems may contain galvanized parts if the reference standard is AWWA 103-87 or if the manufacturer and the galvanizer have their components tested by the NSF. This would then enable them to become certified for installing drinking water systems.

If there are any galvanizers in the AGA who have gone through this qualification, I would appreciate if they would contact the AGA offices and relate their experiences.

If there are other galvanizers who wish to have the AGA pursue an industry wide qualification, please let us know at the AGA offices. So, the simple answer to the original question is: If you are using a certified galvanizers product, it is acceptable for drinking water systems.