



Fast. Easy. Saves Labor. Just Walk It In.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q 1__How can I save labor by using Creatherm™ panels?

In the short run, you can save labor hours by using the unique knobs or castles to grab your PEX. The panel's design allows installers to keep their spacing consistent. If the installers don't like the layout, simply pull up the PEX and start over. In the long run, "walking" the PEX into place can save up to 75% of hand and knee "tie off" time and the ergonomic problems that can follow.

Q 2__What are the advantages of using Creatherm™ panels?

Ease of use; labor savings; energy savings; environmentally friendly; faster construction; few design limitations; won't support mold growth; provides no food source for termites or other pests.

Q 3__How do I cut Creatherm™ panels?

Any circular or reciprocating saw will work, or the panels can be scored and snapped with a knife and straightedge.

Q 4__How can I prevent PEX 'pop' in cold weather?

PEX tubing can be a challenge to unwind and bend in cold weather regardless of how it is being installed. Try to keep the PEX warm before and during installation to minimize the possibility of kinks and backlash. If your PEX wants to "pop" in a bend, it may be necessary to use an occasional plastic staple or half clamp to fasten the PEX to the Creatherm panel.

Q 5__What about R value ratings?

The R value controversy is as confusing as the IRS tax code and many insulation vendors like it that way. While there is a lot of difference between lab testing and real life, thermodynamics doesn't change, regardless of what is published on a vendor's line card. R means resistance to heat flow. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating power. More R means less heat loss, but more material cost. In slab-on-grade hydronic installations, you need a thermal break under the tubing to keep the heat in the slab and prevent heat from escaping to the ground underneath. If necessary, panels can be placed over rigid bead board or extruded polystyrene to achieve a greater R value insulation factor.

Q 6__How much R value is correct for my project?

Consult with your radiant designer for your project. Factors such as climate, water table and occupancy, among others, will influence the "R" value desirable and economically justifiable. In many cases, Creatherm panels have sufficient "R" value to be placed directly on the leveled sub base. To get the marked R-value for the desired Creatherm panel, it is essential that this insulation be installed properly. If you do it yourself, follow the instructions carefully.

Q 7__What is the purpose of the plastic skin over the panels?

Creatherm panels have a skin to provide the toughness required to withstand the rigors of the job site. If a knob is damaged or some of the skin torn during installation or concrete pouring, it won't hurt the function of the panel. If you anticipate heavy traffic before the pour we advise protecting the panels with plywood sheeting. Repeated removal and replacement of PEX may hamper the ability of the panels to continue to grip tubing.

Q 8__Does the color of the plastic skin mean anything?

Plastic film color has no effect on the properties of the panel.

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Q 9__Are Creatherm™ panels flammable?

Because they are treated with a fire retardant, exposed Creatherm panels will self-extinguish once a source of flame is removed. After installation the concrete pour will act as a barrier and the foam panels should not contribute to a fire.

Q 10__Do Creatherm™ panels act as a vapor barrier?

We would love to say yes, but we would be misleading you. In ASHRAE terms there is no such thing as vapor “barriers”, only vapor transmission “retarders”. Technically, Creatherm panels could be described as class 3 vapor transmission “retarders”. However, in order to be an effective vapor transmission “retarder” all of the joints would need to be sealed between the moisture source and the slab. We recommend at least a 6 mil polyethylene material made specifically for this purpose be properly installed.

Q 11__Will Creatherm™ panels harbor mold?

ASTM C1338 (Standard Test Method for Determining Fungi Resistance of Insulation Materials and Facings) testing done on expanded polystyrene has demonstrated that under laboratory conditions there was no trace of growth over a 28 day incubation period. This test was done for 5 types of fungal growth.

Q 12__Can Creatherm™ panels be used for outdoor applications?

The best outdoor use for Creatherm panels is snow melt on concrete sidewalks, drive ways or handicapped ramps.

Q 13__Can Creatherm™ panels be used on a second story?

Yes, but only if the building structure will support the weight of the concrete or lightweight concrete. Another consideration is the additional height of the combined thickness (usually 3” to 4”) of the panels and concrete.

Q 14__Will the panels crush under the concrete?

6” of concrete will exert about 1 psi of compressive weight. Creatherm panels have a compressive strength in excess of 36 psi.

Q 15__Why is a concrete or lightweight concrete over-pour necessary?

Creatherm panels are designed for use with the thermal mass “flywheel” effect of concrete. A heated mass tends to radiate warmth long after the heat source is removed, providing the most comfortable heat imaginable. Also, hydronic radiant heat is very economical because it heats the thermal mass instead of the air.

Q 16__How do I know how many Creatherm™ panels I need?

Creatherm panels are sold only in full cartons. Estimate the total square feet of panels needed and divide by the square feet covered by a full carton of the product you select. As an example, if your project requires 25,000 sq. ft./80 sq. ft. for the 10 panels in the S45 carton = 312.5 cartons. We would ship 313 cartons, and you would have a few left for miscuts and odd cuts. Refer to the shipping information on the product spec sheets for carton quantities by product line.

Q 17__Why do I need to level the sub base before installing Creatherm™ panels?

Good workmanship always pays dividends and this is no exception. The panels will lay flatter with less chance of breakage if you can keep the high and low spots within an 1” of each other. You will have less panel damage and a more even pour. Your customer will be happier because the result will be a more even heat distribution.

Q 18__What about wire mesh?

If wire mesh is being used on the installation Creatherm panels will still hold the PEX on the base and not be tied to the mesh. This eliminates concerns about the PEX “floating” near the surface during the pour.

Q 19__Are Creatherm™ panels recyclable?

Creatherm panels can be reprocessed into the basic polystyrene resin they are derived from.

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Creatherm™ panels are manufactured out of Styropor® and Neopor® supplied by BASF using lightweight, closed-cell plastic resin processed in our plants and injected into a custom-built mold where steam is introduced, causing the foam to hold its shape. Creatherm™ is manufactured according to the proprietary process protected by U.S. Design Patents No. D541396 and No. D587358 and is a registered trademark licensed to the Creatherm Company.