

# Technical Note

## TN 5.03 HDPE Pipe Repair Options

### Introduction

High-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe is lightweight and very easy to handle. The attributes that make the pipe easy to use can also make it easy to abuse, resulting in damaged pipe or joints. This technical bulletin discusses some of the products available that can be used to repair damaged HDPE pipe or joints in the field.

### Repair Options

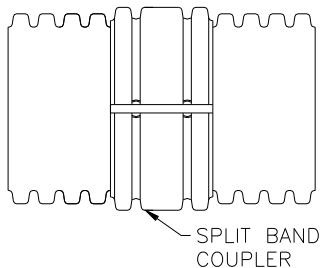
One of the primary considerations in selecting a repair method is the degree of joint performance required. Watertight repairs are generally used on pipe with watertight joints, and soil-tight repairs on pipe with soil-tight joints. This helps keep costs in line and prevents the repair from being the weak area of the pipe system.

The way in which a pipe can be accessed is another primary consideration which influences what type of repair alternative is selected. Pipe that is not yet buried, or can be easily excavated, can be repaired from the exterior. If the pipe is buried and cannot be conveniently excavated, an internal repair may be the best alternative. If the pipe is too small to enter, there are companies with remote controlled equipment that can install the product. Each situation must be considered individually.

The repair options addressed below are divided into external repairs and internal repairs. During any pipe repair, backfill should be placed and compacted per project specifications to provide proper support for the pipe and coupler.

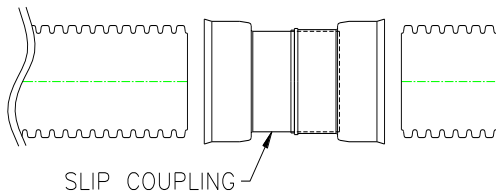
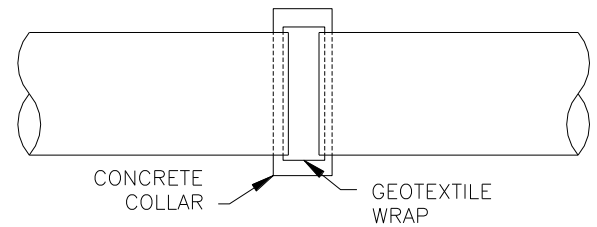
### External Mechanical Repairs

*Mar Mac Polyseal Pipe Coupler*, 4- through 60-inch (100 - 1500 mm), consists of a mastic adhesive base layer, a cross-laminated polyethylene middle layer with a spun-bonded geotextile polypropylene cloth outer layer. The coupler incorporates a self-adhering rubberized bonding mastic and securing bands to insure a positive seal around the pipe. If the pipe itself is damaged, the damaged area will need to be removed and a new pipe section spliced in before installing a coupler around both ends. Polyseal Pipe Couplers are reasonably priced, especially when considering the quality of the finished repair, and are typically used with soil-tight smooth interior corrugated HDPE pipe products. *Note: Mar-Mac bands shall be installed in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.*



*Snap couplers*, 4- through 8-inch (100 – 200 mm), and *split band couplers*, 10- through 30-inch (250 – 750 mm), will provide a soil-tight repair with or without gaskets. This repair method should only be used if the damaged area is in a non-trafficked green area, is cosmetic in nature, confined to a single corrugation, and is not defined as structural damage. The coupler shall be centered around the damaged area of pipe and tightened down with the nylon straps. If the damaged area is large or significant, the damaged area is to be cut out, and replaced with a new section of pipe. The replacement section is to be 'spliced' in place using snap or split band couplers. They are a convenient, low-cost repair alternative, and are typically used to repair soil-tight smooth interior corrugated HDPE pipe products.

*Concrete collars* also provide a soil-tight repair, dependent on the integrity of the installation. Installing a concrete collar involves building a form around the area to be repaired and encasing it in concrete. A geotextile is usually wrapped around the repair area prior to pouring the collar to keep the concrete from seeping into the pipe. Typically, approximately 6" (0.15m) is excavated beneath the pipe to allow for proper application of the geotextile and concrete encasement. If the pipe itself is damaged, the damaged area shall be removed and a replacement pipe section spliced in prior to pouring the collar. In order to provide a greater level of joint performance, a gasket can be installed on the pipe in the concrete encasement. Concrete collars are typically more costly and time consuming than snap couplers or split band couplers but are reasonable repair options for soil-tight smooth interior corrugated HDPE pipe products.



*Slip Couplings* 4- through 24-inch (100 – 600 mm), provides a watertight repair that will meet most pressure testing requirements, when installed correctly. The slip coupling uses PVC bells with gaskets. The gaskets are placed in the valleys on either side of the section to be repaired and slip couplings are then slid over the gaskets. PVC slip couplings are most commonly used with watertight smooth interior corrugated HDPE pipe products. .

## External or Internal Repairs

Field welding may be an option for repairing either damaged sections of pipe or when cracks or gaps are present. Extrusion welding equipment is required for field welding, requiring man access to the section of pipe to be repaired. This requires a large enough pipe diameter for internal repair or removing backfill around the pipe for external repairs. Depending on the extent of the repair, a single bead of weld or HDPE sheet reinforcement will be used. The company performing the field welding will assist in determining access requirements and the extent of the necessary repairs.

## Internal Repairs

Internal mechanical repair products generally consist of a flexible cylindrical gasket sleeve, which is expanded to conform to the inner wall of the pipe. The feasibility of this repair method depends on the size of the damaged section or joint and available access into the pipe. Internal mechanical seals slightly restrict the inside diameter of the pipe. This should be considered when assessing the risk of debris obstruction.

NPC Internal Joint Seal, 18- through 60-inch (450 – 1500 mm), consists of an EPDM rubber seal and stainless steel bands. The rubber seal is inserted into the pipe and positioned over the joint. A torque wrench is used to expand the bands against the inner wall of the pipe. The Internal Joint Seal is designed to seal joints – not repair damaged pipe sections. The damaged area of the pipe must be removed and a replacement section spliced in if necessary in order to use the Internal Joint Seal. This system may provide a watertight joint when installed as recommended. The manufacture should be contacted to verify the product meets the specific application requirements including test requirements, if specified. If pressure tests are required, NPC should be contacted to ensure that the product is suitable for the specific test criteria.

Internal mechanical seals will slightly restrict the inside diameter of the pipe. This should be considered when assessing the risk of debris obstruction.

*Link Pipe Grouting Sleeve™*, 4 through 60 inch (100 – 1500 mm), is a stainless steel grouting sleeve that is installed with an inflatable plug. The sleeve may be used to seal a joint or repair short sections of damaged pipe. The manufacture should be contacted to verify the product meets the specific application requirements including test requirements, if specified.

*Internal chemical sealing* is another method of internal joint repair using chemically activated gel or grout to minimize joint leakage. The grout is typically applied with specialized remote-controlled equipment. Test/seal packer is used to remotely seal a joint. The grouting chemicals are forced through the joint out into the surrounding soil where they gel with the soil. The gelled mass forms a waterproof collar around the pipe. The result is significantly reduced leakage. There are several types of chemical grouts available, and the manufacturer should be contacted to review the specific situation and any joint tightness or pressure test criteria. Companies such as Avanti International, Strata Tech Inc., and Carylton Corporation manufacture and/or install chemical grout. Stephen's Technologies *New Life Coatings* and *NewLife Liner Systems* as well as Avast Hydro-Lining International, are examples of companies that offer cured in place epoxy lining systems that have been effectively used with HDPE pipe. Most pipe diameters can be chemically grouted provided the grouting contractor has the appropriate equipment.

## Manufacturer Contact Information

Contact the Regional Engineer or Application Engineering Department for assistance with other unique conditions or for contact information regarding any companies listed in this technical note.

*Note: The HDPE pipe products are solely intended for the conveyance of fluids. Access into this product for maintenance, inspection, repair, or other reason should be done in strict accordance with OSHA recommendations for confined space entry.*

