



HVAC Press Fittings Flame-Free Installation Method Protects Priceless Artifacts

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RLS Fittings Provide the Perfect Solution for the Smithsonian Institute

Washington, D.C. is home to many of our country's prominent museums. These museums are tasked with preserving national treasures and historical artifacts for future generations to enjoy. What most people may not realize is the critical role HVAC/R plays in the preservation process. Because dust, moisture and other environmental factors can speed up deterioration, centuries old artifacts must be kept in dry, cool climate-controlled rooms. A non-functioning or inefficient HVAC system could be detrimental to the relics housed within museums.

Welch & Rushe is a full-service mechanical company based in Upper Marlboro, Maryland that has been serving the D.C. area for more than 50 years. Throughout the company's history, they have provided HVAC/R services for countless government buildings and museums. One of the company's longtime customers has been none other than the world-renowned Smithsonian Institute. Welch & Rushe have completed various projects for the Smithsonian

including a full renovation of the Smithsonian Art Gallery and National Zoo.

For its latest undertaking, the company was hired to quickly replace an old climate control system in one of the Smithsonian Libraries' vaults, but this project was unlike the others they have completed. The vaults stored books dating back to the 1500s, making them too fragile to move and too risky to use an open flame for brazing. The project required a flame-free installation process that could get the job done quickly and reliably.

Fortunately, lead installer Zach Bailey had recently discovered Rapid Locking System (RLS). After extensive research and a training session, Bailey knew that RLS was the ideal solution.

RLS press fittings offer a flame-free alternative to the conventional process of brazing, providing contractors with an approach to joining HVAC/R lines that is fast,

Efficiency Without the Flame

safe, consistent and efficient. The press fittings are installed through a press-to-connect process and can be applied in a matter of just seconds, offering contractors a permanent mechanical connection up to 60 percent faster than brazing.

After reviewing the spec sheet and fittings with the engineers, Bailey and his team were approved to move forward with RLS. The team used more than 40 fittings to install a water-cooled Samsung system, including 15 three-eighth couplings which Bailey installed in under one minute each with press compared to the five minutes it would have taken had he brazed them.

Press also gave Bailey's team an

unexpected advantage throughout the project: because press fittings never require the use of an open flame, it completely removes the need for costly and time-consuming fire precautions including hot work permits, fire spotters and fire safety equipment. By providing an alternative solution to the conventional process of brazing that is fast, safe and reliable, Bailey's team completed the project ahead of time and right on budget.

"Acquiring burn permits can be a major challenge and slow down projects," said Bailey. "Thanks to RLS, we were able to exceed the client's needs without a torch and save time and money in the process."

Now, Bailey keeps the press tool and fittings on his truck for him and his colleagues to use whenever and wherever possible. He credits his trust for letting technicians of all experience levels use the tool to its ability to create repeatable and reliable pipe connections. Both skilled contractors and inexperienced apprentices can learn how to properly prep tubing, operate a press tool and install the perfect fitting in just a single training session.

"I felt comfortable using and showing others how to use RLS after just one training," Bailey said. "The more we use the tool, the more we like it. We may just have to get a second one soon."

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