

FlexHead commercial fire sprinkler connections

Innovative Thinking Results
in a 10,000-foot Fit-Out
Completed in 15 Days with
No Cost Premium

CASE STUDY

FlexHead Systems Help Cut New Office Development Schedule by 75%

It isn't often a developer/project management company can implement goals and even perhaps controversial ideas they have recommended to clients, but that have never left the conference room. But that's what Leggat McCall Properties was able to do for themselves. When it came to fitting out their new offices, the Boston-based company saw a prime opportunity to apply their own best ideas with others they'd come across, and to substantiate their effectiveness.

Their goals were to challenge traditional construction standards, compress the conventional 10- to 12-week schedule down to just 15 days, and to do so within 10% of traditional costs without compromising quality.

According to Eric Sheffels, Leggat McCall Properties President and Chief Investment Officer, "These goals were achieved through good preconstruction and precise implementation that embraced new technologies, green development techniques, aggressive benchmarks and built-in flexibility for future reconfigurations. We streamlined the design and construction processes by eliminating antiquated and unnecessary steps. The primary enabling technology was an innovative palette of materials."

This palette included FlexHead flexible fire sprinkler connections.

"We wanted to use FlexHead because they make sense across their whole lifecycle," explains Karl Neubauer, Leggat McCall Properties' senior project manager, "and they're consistent with the green objectives we had of achieving LEED Gold status."

100% Roughed-in and Out of the Way on Day 4

Essentially, the new office space was a white shell with minimal sprinkler coverage. Leggat McCall wanted to use the landlord's system, so first they confirmed that the mains and laterals were properly sized.

"Our idea was to install threaded Ts between the existing sprinkler heads so that we could just screw FlexHeads onto them and be done with it," Neubauer recalls. "Put simply, our goal was not to have a pipe-threading machine on the job. While we didn't quite get there, on Day 4, we were 100% roughed for our sprinkler system."

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The FlexHeads were wired up and out of the way, waiting for the ceiling grid. Later, when it was in place, we just dropped the FlexHeads down and connected them to the grid."

Getting FlexHead connections set to go and out of the way so quickly had several benefits.

"That's multiple guys that you don't have up on ladders, getting in the way when you're trying to do other stuff quickly," he notes. "Plus, you want to do just one drain-down, put all these FlexHeads on, tie them up and out of the way, and let them sit there until the ceiling grid comes.

*"If we did conventional pipe, we would have had more shut-downs, which would have cost us more money because the landlord charges every time you do that. Also, we would have wasted water. We're trying to do **a sustainable LEED project**, and every time you drain down the system, you're dumping water down the drain, which we didn't want to do."*

Slash Reconfiguration Time and Cost

Although Leggat McCall doesn't expect to reconfigure the offices any time soon, they did study what it would take, since one of their goals was to make almost everything reusable.

"We wanted to know how much it would cost and how long it would take if we combined two offices into one," Neubauer explains.

"Because we can reuse just about everything, we estimated that it would cut costs by 80% and time by 75%.

"Reconfiguring the sprinkler system is part of that," says Neubauer. "If I were a landlord, I'd have FlexHead as a building standard because it's an investment in my building that I can reuse over and over again."

"If You Buy It Right, There's a First-Cost Advantage."

In many ways, the 15-day project was a test ground for products, techniques and ideas. So Leggat McCall kept close track of the experience, from specifying and bidding through installation and completion.

"We bid the job both ways, and FlexHead came in a little higher than hard pipe, but not much," Neubauer says. "When we bid it, we had the subs break out the labor and material. Commodore tracked actual labor over the course of the project.

"It took them less time than anticipated, and they made some money on us, shame on us!" he laughs. "So you can see where the trend is going, and if you buy it right, there's a first-cost advantage as well as a lifecycle advantage to FlexHead."

U.S. and international patents pending: #6,123,154, #6,119,784, #6,752,218, #7,032,680, #6,488,097.

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FGG/BM/CZ® System Compatible indicates this product has been tested and is monitored on an ongoing basis to assure chemical compatibility with FlowGuard Gold®, BlazeMaster®, and Corzan® pipe and fittings.

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With FlexHead they only had to do one drain-down, saving time, money and water. Saving water is consistent with green objectives and the project achieved LEED Gold Status.



FlexHeads were installed, tested and out of the way so that the other trades could work without worrying about sprinkler piping or contractors getting in the way.

For more information on the fascinating story of how Leggat McCall Properties achieved all of their goals in a 15-day fit-out, please visit www.15days.tv.

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