AUG 24 2026 AM10:36

RULE NO.: R161-26.03

NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE **POSTING DATE: August 24, 2026**

The Director of Austin Water proposes to adopt the following rule on October 1, 2026.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF PROPOSED RULE

A rule proposed in this notice may not become effective before the effective date established by a separate notice of rule adoption. A notice of rule adoption may not be posted before September 25, 2026, or after November 2, 2026 (the 70th day after the date of this notice).

If a proposed rule is not adopted on or before November 2, 2026, it is automatically withdrawn and cannot be adopted without first posting a new notice of a proposed rule.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON PROPOSED RULES

The City requests comments from the public with respect to the proposed rule included in this Notice. Comments must be submitted in writing to the contact person below no later than September 24, 2026. A summary of the written comments received will be included in the notice of rule adoption that must be posted for the rule to become effective.

Contact Person:

Eric Langhout
Austin Water Department
eric.langhout@austintexas.gov
512-972-0073

TEXT OF PROPOSED RULE

The text of the proposed rule indicating changes from the current text is attached to this notice.

BRIEF EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED RULE

R161-26.03: Proposed revision to Standard Specification Item

Rule 2 – Revision to Standard Specification 510

1. Item 510 – Pipe – **Item 510.2(8)(j)** – Update language for the tracer tape for all pipe (not just non-metallic pipe) and remove the inductive requirement. The contractor will also follow the manufacturer's instructions on the placement of the tape.

2. Item 510 – Pipe – **Item 510.3(24)(a)** – Add information about Shut-Down Periods for Large Mains in Standard Specification 510.

3. Item 510 – Pipe – **Item 510.3(25)(d)** – Update language for the tracer tape for all pipe (not just non-metallic pipe) and remove the inductive requirement.

4. Item 510 – Pipe – **Item 510.3(25)(g)** – Update language for the tracer tape for all pipe (not just non-metallic pipe) and remove the inductive requirement.

5. Item 510 – Pipe – **Item 510.3(31)** – Update language for the tracer tape for all pipe (not just non-metallic pipe) and remove the inductive requirement.

An affordability impact statement regarding the proposed rule is available by contacting Eric Langhout, eric.langhout@austintexas.gov or 512-972-0073.

AUTHORITY FOR ADOPTION OF PROPOSED RULE

The authority and procedure for adoption of a rule to assist in the implementation, administration, or enforcement of a provision of the City Code is provided in City Code Chapter 1-2 (*Adoption of Rules*). The authority to adopt this rule is established in City Code Section 15-9-9 (*Criteria Manuals*).

CERTIFICATION BY CITY ATTORNEY

By signing this Notice of Proposed Rule R161-26.03, the City Attorney certifies the City Attorney has reviewed the rule and finds that adoption of the rule is a valid exercise of the Director's administrative authority.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED

Shay Ralls Roalson

Date: 8/7/2026

Shay Ralls Roalson, P.E., Director
Austin Water

Deborah Thomas

Date: 8/11/2026

Deborah Thomas
City Attorney

ITEM NO. 510 PIPE ~~5-8-24~~ 10-01-26

510.2 Materials

(8) Pipe

(j) ~~Inductive~~ Tracer Detection Tape

~~Inductive~~ Tracer Detection Tape shall be placed directly above the centerline of all ~~non-metallic~~ potable water, reclaimed water, and wastewater pipe ~~(PVC and HDPE)~~ a minimum of 12 inches and no deeper than 36 inches below finished grade ~~subgrade~~ or, in areas outside the limits of pavement, a minimum of 18 inches and no deeper than 36 inches below finished grade in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Under no circumstances shall tracer tape be placed closer than 12 inches to the top of the pipe. ~~The tracer tape shall be encased in a protective, inert, plastic jacket and color coded according to American Public Works Association Uniform Color Code. Except for minimum depth of cover, the tracer tape shall be placed according to manufacturer's recommendations.~~ Manufacturers must be listed on SPL WW-597.

510.3 Construction Methods

(24) Potable or Reclaimed Water System Connections

All necessary connections of new piping or accessories to the existing potable or reclaimed water system shall be made by, and at the expense of, the Contractor. To minimize any inconvenience from outages, the Contractor shall schedule all such connections in advance and such schedule must be approved by the E/A before beginning any Work. When cutting existing water mains, the contractor shall ensure the existing pipe shall not be cut within 3 feet of an existing pipe joint. If a pipe joint exists within 3 feet, then adjacent pipe joint shall be removed and new pipe and approved sleeve installed in its place.

(a) Shutoffs

The City will make all shutoffs on existing potable or reclaimed water mains. The Contractor shall be required to notify the Owner's Representative in writing a least twenty five (25) Calendar Days prior to the anticipated date for a wet-connection. The Owner's Representative is defined as the City Inspector. The Owner's Representative will notify any affected utility customers at least 48 hours prior to the shutoff. AW will make the shutoff after ensuring that all appropriate measures have been taken to protect the potable or reclaimed water system, customers and employees.

If a shutout is required for a connection to or relocation of an existing water transmission main (typically 24-inch and larger in diameter for potable water), these shutouts will generally only be allowed from October 1 to March 31. Shutout of these waterlines will require prior approval via the AW Concurrence process prior to shutting off water. COA inspector shall contact AWValveExercising@austintexas.gov six or more weeks before desired schedule for the subject shutout. No shutout will proceed until the contractor is fully prepared to perform work related to the shutout, i.e., all required material, equipment, and labor are on site.

The City will operate all valves to fill existing mains. Where a newly constructed main has not been placed in service and has only one connection to the potable or reclaimed system, the Contractor may operate one valve to fill the main after approval has been obtained from AW. The operation of the valve is to be conducted under the immediate supervision of the Owner's Representative.

Water for the Work shall be metered and furnished by the Contractor in accordance with Section 01500 of the Standard Contract Documents.

(25) Backfilling

(a) General

Special emphasis is placed upon the need to obtain uniform density throughout the backfill material. The maximum lift of backfill shall be determined by the compaction equipment selected and in no case shall it exceed 18 inches, loose measurement.

No heavy equipment, which might damage pipe, will be allowed over the pipe until sufficient cover has been placed and compacted. All internal pipe bracing installed or recommended by the manufacturer shall be kept in place until the pipe bedding and trench backfill have been completed over the braced pipe section. Testing of the completed backfill in streets and under and around structures shall meet the specified density requirements. Initial testing shall not be at Contractor's expense and shall conform to the "General Conditions."

(b) General Corrugated Metal Pipe

After the corrugated metal pipe structure has been completely assembled on the proper line and grade and headwalls constructed where indicated; selected material free from rocks over 8 inches in size from excavation or borrow, as approved by the E/A, shall be placed along both sides of the completed structures equally, in uniform layers not exceeding 6 inches in depth (loose measurement), sprinkled if required and thoroughly compacted between adjacent structures and between the structures and the sides of the trench.

Backfill material shall be compacted to the same density requirements as indicated for the adjoining sections of embankment in accordance with the governing specifications thereof. Above the ¾ point of the structure, the fill shall be placed uniformly on each side of the pipe in layers not to exceed 12 inches, loose measure.

Prior to adding each new layer of loose backfill material, until a minimum of 12 inches of cover is obtained over the crown of the pipe, an inspection will be made of the inside periphery of the corrugated metal structure to determine if any floating, local or unequal deformation has occurred as a result of improper construction methods.

(c) Backfill Materials

The Engineer or designated representative may approve any of the following well graded materials as backfill:

1. Select trench material.
2. Sand.
3. Crushed rock cuttings.
4. Rock cuttings.
5. Foundation Rock.
6. Blasted material with fines and rock.
7. Cement stabilized material.
8. Borrow.

Within the 100-year flood plain, sand will not be permitted for backfilling. The Engineer or designated representative will approve the topsoil for areas to be seeded or sodded.

(d) Backfill in Street Right-of-Way

Placement of backfill under existing or future pavement structures and within 2 feet of any structures shall be compacted to the specified density using any method, type and size of equipment, which will produce the specified compaction without damaging the pipe or bedding. Placement of backfill greater than 2 feet beyond structures in right-of-way shall conform to (g) below. ~~Inductive~~ Tracer Detection Tape shall be placed directly above the centerline of all ~~non-metallic~~potable water, reclaimed water, and wastewater pipe ~~(PVC and HDPE)~~ per 510.2(8)(j).

The thickness of lifts, prior to compaction, shall depend upon the type of sprinkling and compacting equipment used and the test results thereby obtained. Prior to and in conjunction with the compaction operation, each lift shall be brought to the moisture content necessary to obtain the specified density and shall be placed in a uniform thickness to ensure uniform compaction over the entire lift. Testing for density shall be in accordance with Test Method Tex-114-E and Test Method Tex-115-E.

It is highly desirable that the backfill lifts be placed in a flat (or level) configuration; however when approved by the Engineer or designated representative, the backfill lifts may be placed at gradients (percent of vertical rise or fall to horizontal run) that do not exceed 30%.

The proposed gradient for each lift or series of lifts shall be established based on the capabilities of the equipment proposed to attain the required compaction.

Each lift of backfill must provide the density as specified herein. Swelling soils (soils with a minimum Liquid Limit of 50, more than 50% passing a #200 sieve and a plasticity index greater than 22) shall be sprinkled as required to provide not less than optimum moisture nor more than 2 percent over optimum moisture content and compacted to the extent necessary to provide not less than 95 percent nor more than 102 percent of the density as determined in accordance with Test Method Tex-114-E. Non-swelling soils shall be sprinkled as specified and compacted to the extent necessary to provide not less than 95 percent of the density as determined in accordance with Test Method Tex-114-E.

After each lift of backfill is complete, tests may be made by the Engineer or designated representative. If the material fails to meet the density indicated, the course shall be reworked as necessary to obtain the indicated compaction and the compaction method shall be altered on subsequent Work to obtain indicated density.

At any time, the Engineer or designated representative may order proof rolling to test the uniformity of compaction of the backfill lifts. All irregularities, depressions, weak or soft spots that develop shall be corrected immediately by the Contractor.

If the backfill, due to any reason, loses the specified stability, density or finish before the pavement structure is placed, it shall be recompacted and refinished at the sole expense of the Contractor. Excessive loss of moisture in the subgrade shall be prevented by sprinkling, sealing or covering with a subsequent backfill layer or granular material. Excessive loss of moisture shall be construed to exist when the subgrade soil moisture content is more than 4 percent below the optimum of compaction ratio density. Backfill shall be placed from the top of the bedding material to the existing grade, base course, subgrade or as specified. The remainder of the street backfill shall either be Flexible Base, Concrete or Hot Mix Asphalt Concrete as specified on the drawings or replacement "in kind" to the surface of the materials originally removed for placement of the pipe.

(e) Backfill in County Street or State Highway Right-of-Way

All Work within the right-of-way shall meet the requirements of (d) above, as a minimum and shall meet the requirements of the permit issued by the County when their requirements are more stringent. Prior to the start of construction, the Contractor shall be responsible for contacting the appropriate TxDOT office or County Commissioner's Precinct Office and following the operating procedures in effect for utility cut permits and pavement repair under their

jurisdiction. Approval for all completed Work in the State or County right-of-way shall be obtained from the appropriate Official prior to final payment by the Owner.

(f) Backfill in Railroad Right-of-Way

All Work within the railroad right-of-way shall meet the requirements of (d) above, as a minimum and shall meet the requirements of the permit issued by the Railroad Owner when their requirements are more stringent. Approval for all completed Work in the railroad right-of-way shall be obtained from the Railroad prior to Final Completion.

(g) Backfill in Easements

Where not otherwise indicated, Contractor may select whatever methods and procedures may be necessary to restore entire Work area to a safe, useful and geologically stable condition with a minimum density of 85 percent or a density superior to that prior to construction.

In and near flood plain of all streams and watercourses, under or adjacent to utilities, structures, etc. all backfill shall be compacted to a density of not less than 95 percent conforming to TxDOT Test Method Tex-114-E, unless otherwise directed by E/A.

All soil areas disturbed by construction shall be covered with top soil and seeded conforming to Item No. 604, "Seeding for Erosion Control". All turf, drainways and drainage structures shall be constructed or replaced to their original condition or better. No debris shall remain in the drainways or drainage structures.

~~Inductive~~ Tracer Detection Tape shall be placed directly above the centerline of all ~~non-metallic~~ potable water, reclaimed water, and wastewater pipe ~~(PVC and HDPE)~~ per 510.2(8)(j).

(h) Temporary Trench Repair/Surfacing

If details of temporary trench repair/surfacing are not provided in the contract documents, the Contractor shall submit for approval of the E/A (1) a plan for temporary trench repair for areas that will be open to traffic but will be excavated later for full depth repair, and (2) a proposed method for covering trenches to maintain access to properties. The temporary surfacing shall afford a smooth riding surface and shall be maintained by the Contractor the entire time the temporary surface is in place.

(i) Permanent Trench Repair

The Contractor shall install permanent trench repairs conforming to details in the drawings.

(31) AW Walk-Through

As part of the acceptance of Water or Reclaimed Water pressure pipe, an AW Walk-Through will be performed after an initial inspection by the Owner's Representative to identify any deficient items. As part of the AW Walk-Through, AW will confirm the installation of ~~inductive~~ tracer detection tape for projects that contain ~~PVC or HDPE~~ potable water, reclaimed water, or wastewater pipe. If deficient items are present during the AW Walk-Through and the project fails acceptance, a re-inspection fee will apply and must be paid before a re-inspection is scheduled to confirm correction of deficient items. See AW Fee Schedule for the current Distribution Walk-Through Re-inspection Fee.