



City of Austin Planning & Development Review Department

To: Building Contractors
From: Trebor Brown, Plumbing and Mechanical Supervisor
Date: July, 16th 2015
File: Code Interpretation

INTERPRETATION NUMBER: 2015-0003

TITLE: Trenching, Excavation, Bedding and Backfilling of piping.

CODE EDITION: 2012 Uniform plumbing Code, 2000/2003 Uniform plumbing Code Answers and Analysis Manual, 2012 International Plumbing Code

SECTIONS: 2012 Uniform plumbing Code 314.4; 2012 International Plumbing Code Section 306

PURPOSE: To clarify materials to be used for both bedding and backfilling pipe and fittings in an underground application. To establish the correct means of trenching, excavation, bedding, and backfilling

QUESTION: What is the definition of backfilling material?

ANSWER: The material used to fill the void around the pipe and fittings, and the remainder of the excavation or trench from the bottom of the pipe to the top of the excavation or trench.

QUESTION: What is the definition of bedding material?

ANSWER: Bedding is material used to support the pipe and fitting from the bottom of the excavation or trench to the bottom of the pipe and fittings.

QUESTION: What is the correct method and material to be utilized concerning excavation, trenching, bedding and backfilling?


ANSWER: Section 306 of the 2012 IPC clearly explains in detail the correct materials and procedures concerning all situations where excavation, trenching, bedding, and backfilling are required. The 2012 UPC has similar verbage but does not go into the detail the IPC offers.

There is a COA memo dated 12/28/06 that partially addresses bedding and backfill. It states the use of gravel no larger than 1/2" is acceptable for bedding.

However this speaks to bedding alone and does not address backfill. To further confuse the issue the referenced code Section 315.4 of the 2003 UPC clearly address backfilling while the memo itself deals with bedding. The memo does reference backfilling as to being present on site at the time of inspection, but does not identify what that material is.

There is a code interpretation in the 2000/2003 UPC Answers and Analysis Manual also referencing section 315.4 that gives us an answer for backfill material which shall be no larger than 3/16". So from these two documents we are to infer the bedding material shall be no larger than 1/2" while the backfill material shall be no larger than 3/16". However neither document, (nor the UPC itself), address the installation of these materials as clear as the IPC.

Since section 306 of the IPC is more prescriptive than the UPC and there are no conflicts between the two, the IPC section 306 shall be the defining method for trenching, excavation, bedding and backfilling.



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