



TO: All Internal and External Stakeholders

FROM: Beth Culver, AIA, PMP, Chief Plans Examiner
Development Services Department

DATE: January 1, 2018

SUBJECT: Information Bulletin No. 2018-0001, Mechanical Code 310.10 Standards for Air Conditioning Condensate Recovery Systems for New Development

File: Code Interpretation Manual

As a customer service initiative, the Development Services Department (DSD) in cooperation with Austin Water has developed this Information Bulletin (IB) in order to describe and clarify the requirements under **310.10 Standards for Air Conditioning Condensate Recovery Systems for New Development** of the city's Mechanical Code and to achieve the intended purpose of this requirement in the most practical, economical and cost effective manner and to be used as guidance for department plan review and inspections.

On June 2017, the Austin City Council approved the adoption of the 2015 Uniform Mechanical Code including the following local amendment effective September 6, 2017 (RESOLUTION 20170608-056):

310.10 Standards for air condition condensate recovery systems for new development. Commercial and multi-family facilities constructed after December 31, 2016, with an air conditioning system with a combined cooling capacity equal to or greater than 200 tons must use a single and independent condensate wastewater line to collect and use the condensate wastewater for authorized beneficial purposes. For purposes of this section, authorized beneficial purposes includes using condensate wastewater to process water; to make up cooling tower water; to flush indoor toilets; to irrigate landscape; or other approved non-potable water uses. Except as provided in the Mechanical Code, condensate wastewater generated by an air condition system described in this section may not be discharged. Potable water may be used for cooling tower make-up water if the condensate wastewater generated is insufficient to meet the cooling tower's make-up water needs.

Exception. Condensate wastewater may be discharged, consistent with the requirements in Section 310.1, if the amount of condensate wastewater exceeds existing irrigation, cooling tower make-up, or other non-potable water needs at the facility.

The new requirement was the result of city council direction to implement water conservation measures recommended by citizen task forces in 2007 (RESOLUTION 20070503-029) and in 2014 (RESOLUTION NO. 20140807-090). The purpose of the recommendations were to conserve potable water, reduce potable water treatment and distribution costs, and reduce water and wastewater costs to customers by offsetting potable water demand with on-site alternative water sources



In response to comments by Austin Water, Water Conservation Division, customer questions and issues regarding enforcement of the ordinance above, the DSD issues this guidance:

- (1) Section 310.10 has an express effective date of January 1, 2017 that is in conflict with the effective date of the council ordinance (Resolution Number 20170608-056). Therefore, the requirements of §310.10 shall be enforced for a new buildings for which the permit application was submitted on or after September 6, 2017.
- (2) Meeting eligible demands with municipal reclaimed water or other alternative on-site sources of water that meets the goal of offsetting potable water demands shall be considered in the review of requests for alternative compliance. Where §6-4-11(E) of the City Code also applies, Austin Water prefers that municipal reclaimed water be used in lieu of AC condensate.
- (3) In order to maximize the protection of public health and safety, the use of condensate for toilet flushing, spray irrigation, or other uses with the potential for human contact shall not be *required* under this ordinance. This shall not prohibit customers from seeking authorization for these or any other authorized use pursuant to state and local treatment, design and permitting standards. However, the use of condensate for subsurface irrigation may be required under §310.10, in accordance with this guidance.
- (4) Where there is no eligible or required demand to be met with AC condensate water, the condensate shall be discharged to the sanitary system for reuse in the Austin Water reclaimed water system or to another authorized approved discharge location.
- (5) It will not be required to meet every eligible water demand where separate distribution, storage, or treatment systems are needed to meet multiple water demands. Any amount of AC condensate that exceeds the amount needed for an eligible or required water demand provided in the approved plan design shall be discharged to the sanitary system for reuse in the Austin Water reclaimed water system or to another authorized approved location.
- (6) The limitations of designs for condensate recovery and use systems for new tenant lease spaces due to the lack of ability to modify other adjacent tenant spaces shall be considered in a request for alternative compliance.
- (7) DSD recognizes that the use of pumps, storage and distribution systems for the use of condensate may not be cost effective in certain circumstances and have further negative consequences regarding energy conservation. For new systems designed for larger one-story buildings where the system is designed with multiple units not installed in close proximity, and where it is not possible to manifold the condensate into one collection point without a pumping system, multiple collection points may be considered by DSD in a request for alternative compliance. Where it is not physically possible to maintain the 1/8-inch minimum slope of condensate lines and be able to tie the condensate together, multiple collection points may also be approved through alternative compliance. For lease spaces in a multi-tenant retail center where it is not usually feasible to manifold the condensate lines together involving adjacent spaces, each individual lease space will not be required to tie into adjacent tenant condensate lines. Each space shall be required to design condensate lines as if the space were a standalone structure in order to comply with the code. The request is to be submitted to DSD showing how the proposed design meets the intent of the code. The use of municipal reclaimed water and/or alternative on-site sources of water other than condensate to meet all non-potable water demands shall constitute alternative compliance with this ordinance.



- (8) The repair, replacement, or relocation of existing units may be undertaken without needing to comply with this ordinance where the existing condensate collection does not meet the code requirements.
- (9) The permit applicant is responsible for the design of the condensate system in accordance with applicable state and city requirements. Austin Water recommends applicants refer to the *Multi-Family Residential & Commercial Onsite Water Reuse Guide for Customers* (Austin Water 2017) and the *San Antonio Condensate Collection and Use Manual for Commercial Buildings* (San Antonio Water System 2013, Diana D. Glawe, PhD, PE, LEED AP) for additional guidance.

If you have any questions regarding this Information Bulletin, please call a Mechanical Plans Examiner in Commercial Plan Review at (512) 978-4000.

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