

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of)	DOCKET NO. UG-010405
)	
AVISTA CORPORATION, D/B/A)	ORDER NO. 02
AVISTA UTILITIES,)	
)	
For a Waiver of WAC 480-93-010 to)	
Install Two Above Ground)	
Polyethylene Gas Mains in Steel)	
Casings Above the Little Spokane)	ORDER RESCINDING WAIVER OF
River in Spokane Washington)	WAC 480-93-010
.....)	

BACKGROUND

1 On February 26, 2001, Avista Utilities (Avista) filed a petition for waiver of the requirements in 49 CFR 192.321(a), which is incorporated into the Washington Administrative Code as WAC 480-93-010. On May 30, 2001, the Commission entered an order granting the petition, on condition. The Commission’s Order allowed Avista to install two 6-inch polyethylene (PE) natural gas pipelines inside 10-inch steel casings across the Spokane River and Little Spokane River in Spokane, Washington. The Order adopted as conditions of approval the following additional safety measures that had been proposed by Avista:

- The Maximum Allowable Operating Pressure of this pipeline will be 60 psig.
- All above-ground pipe will be encased in a 10-inch steel casing which will terminate below ground level.
- The 10-inch steel casing will be installed inside the box girder of the bridge away from direct sunlight.
- A thermal well will be installed on the casing to allow for the monitoring of temperature fluctuations.

- Avista will conduct temperature readings during the highest and lowest temperatures of the year and after one year will review the information to ensure that the design limitation of the PE pipe is not exceeded. This review must be documented and kept for the life of the pipeline.
- A boot-type end seal will be used at both ends of the casing.
- Thinsulators will be placed no more than 5' apart.
- Continuous coil pipe will be used to eliminate any fusion joints inside the casing.
- Quarterly leak surveys will be conducted with an approved combustible gas indicator or hydrogen flame ionization unit for two years following completion of the installation.
- After two years of operation, leak surveys will be conducted during regularly scheduled patrols.

2 On October 3, 2005, Avista filed a request to rescind the waiver granted on May 30, 2001. Avista states that on July 14, 2004, the federal authorities adopted CFR 49 §192.321(h)(3) to allow the installation of plastic pipe on bridges if it is:

1. Installed with protection from mechanical damage, such as installation in a metallic casing;
2. Protected from ultraviolet radiation; and
3. Not allowed to exceed the pipe temperature limits specified in §192.123.

Staff recognizes CFR 49 §192.321(h)(3) as the current standard in Washington for plastic above-ground bridge crossings.

3 Avista states its belief that the requirements of its existing waiver are excessive and requests that its waiver be rescinded.

DISCUSSION

- 4 Prior to July 2004, federal pipeline safety regulations prohibited the installation of polyethylene (PE) pipe in certain above-ground applications such as bridge crossings. Recent advances in PE pipe material, performance and reliability have made it suitable for these applications. The federal Pipeline and Hazardous Material Administration (PHMSA) has concurred with a number of state waivers allowing for plastic pipe installations on bridges. These waivers required that pipeline companies take additional safety measures to ensure that pipe be well protected from mechanical damage, elevated temperatures, and ultraviolet radiation exposure. There is no record of failure of PE pipe that has been installed under these waivers. In addition, progress in the design, manufacture and installation of plastic pipe have rendered it even more fit for broad application in gas pipeline systems. CFR 49 § Part 192.321(h)(3), adopted in 2004, now permits the use of plastic pipe across bridges, if the pipe is protected in accordance with the requirements noted in the regulation.
- 5 The waiver previously granted to Avista imposes conditions more stringent than those now recognized to adequately protect the public. Accordingly, the Commission concludes it should grant Avista's request to rescind the waiver and allow the Company to operate in conformance with the requirements of CFR 49 § Part 192.321(h)(3).

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 6 Avista Utilities' request to rescind the Commission's prior waiver of WAC 480-983-010 (1) to allow the installation of above ground plastic pipe crossing across bridge crossings in Spokane, Washington, is granted.

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DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 25th day of January, 2006.

WASHIINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary