

Austin Water Emergency Management & Preparedness



Climate, Water, Environment
and Parks Committee

January 28, 2026

Agenda



- **All Hazards Emergency Management**

Richard Beaman

Emergency Management Division Manager, Austin Water

- **Emergency Communications**

Amy Petri

Interim Chief of Staff, Austin Water

- **Winter Preparedness Activities**

Stephanie Sue

Water Treatment Operations Manager, Austin Water

All Hazards Emergency Management

Richard Beaman

Emergency Management Division Manager, Austin Water

Continuous Emergency Management



- VEOCI software used for daily reporting, as well as routine and emergency incident tracking.
- AW pioneered use of VEOCI and is now used by other City departments.
- Facility all-hazards check-lists and Continuity of Operations Plans posted and accessible in VEOCI.

A screenshot of the Austin Water Situational Awareness Dashboard. The dashboard has a dark header with the Austin Water logo and navigation links for Members, Actions, View, and Idle Refresh. On the left is a sidebar with icons for Members, Actions, View, and Facility Status. The main area is divided into several sections: 'Operational Status' (a table of facilities and their operational status), 'Status Update Count' (a list of awareness levels with counts: Critical Awareness 0, Elevated Awareness 1, Emergency Shutdown 0, Local Incident 0, Normal Operations 52, Scheduled Shutdown 0, Security Alert 0, and See Opcon Level 0), and 'OPERATIONAL CONDITION' (a section with a green box labeled 'OPCON 1 normal operations'). There is also a 'Fire Wx Status' section showing current fire weather conditions. At the bottom, there are three small maps of Texas.

Continuous Emergency Management

- Multiple emergency tabletop exercises are organized and held in partnership with other City departments and agencies.
- Monthly emergency notification, life safety plan, shelter in place and/or emergency evacuation drills are conducted throughout our system.
- Department Operations Center emergency activation thresholds are set and monitored continuously.



Incident Management Team

Incident Management Team

- Three rotating shifts during emergency activations; designated staff on call 24/7 during normal operations.
- 34 positions can be filled by 196 trained staff.
- Clearly defined roles for all positions.



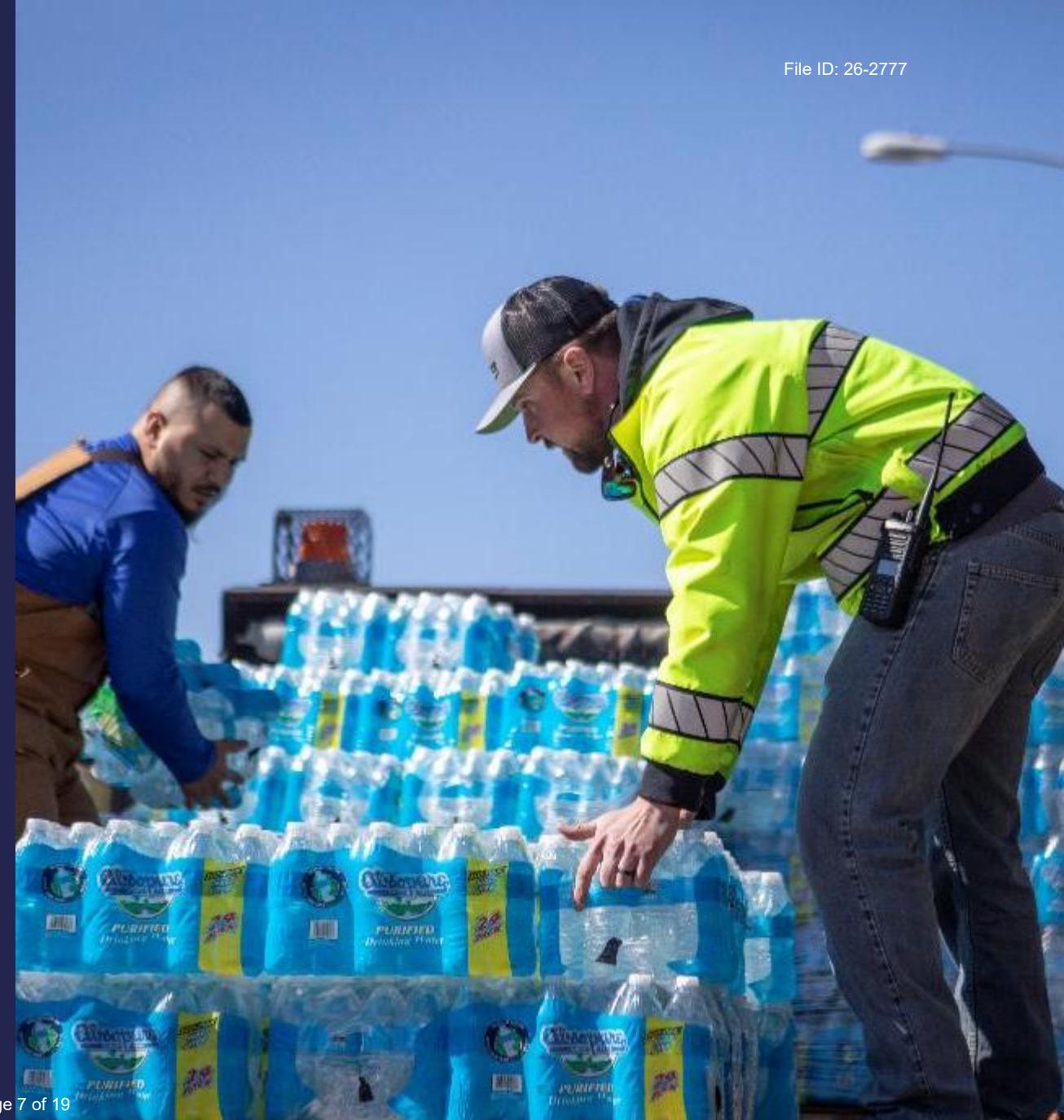
Incident Command System Training

- Online and in-person
- Role specific
- Hosting and instructing FEMA ICS-300 (Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents) classes in February, April, and July



Operational Readiness

- Water treatment plants maintain a baseline capacity of 235 MGD for operational and system readiness.
- Equipment, materials, and people staged ahead of incoming weather.
- Generators are in place at critical facilities, with emergency backup generator contracts that can be called in immediately.
- Plans, supplies and equipment are in place for community-wide potable water distribution.
- Pre-designation of critical and essential personnel; emergency operations procedures and schedules in place.



Emergency Supplies

Hub Warehouse Equipped for Incidents and Emergencies

- Shelter in place supplies for staff: cots, blankets, meals ready to eat, bottled water, and hygiene kits
- Emergency water distribution supplies for customers: bottled water, water totes, fire hydrant adaptors

Two Potable Water Trucks

Bottled Water Contracts Ready

- Local vendor with supply on hand
- Second vendor for multiple truck load shipments



Employee Preparedness

- All hazard training and safety briefings
- Personal protective equipment provided - coats, gloves, head cover, and other durable clothing
- Warming and cooling stations
- Weather forecast monitoring (VEOCl)
- Supplies for driving on ice (chains for tires and spikes for boots)
- Shelter and bottled water supplies at plants for staff



Emergency Communications

Amy Petri
Interim Chief of Staff, Austin Water

Communications Preparedness

Messaging for potential water impacts prepared in advance and reviewed annually:

- Boil water notice
- Sanitary sewer overflow
- Do not drink advisory
- Winter preparedness

Emergency materials prepared for:

- Website pages
- Videos
- Frequently asked questions
- Media releases
- Portal notifications
- Social media posts

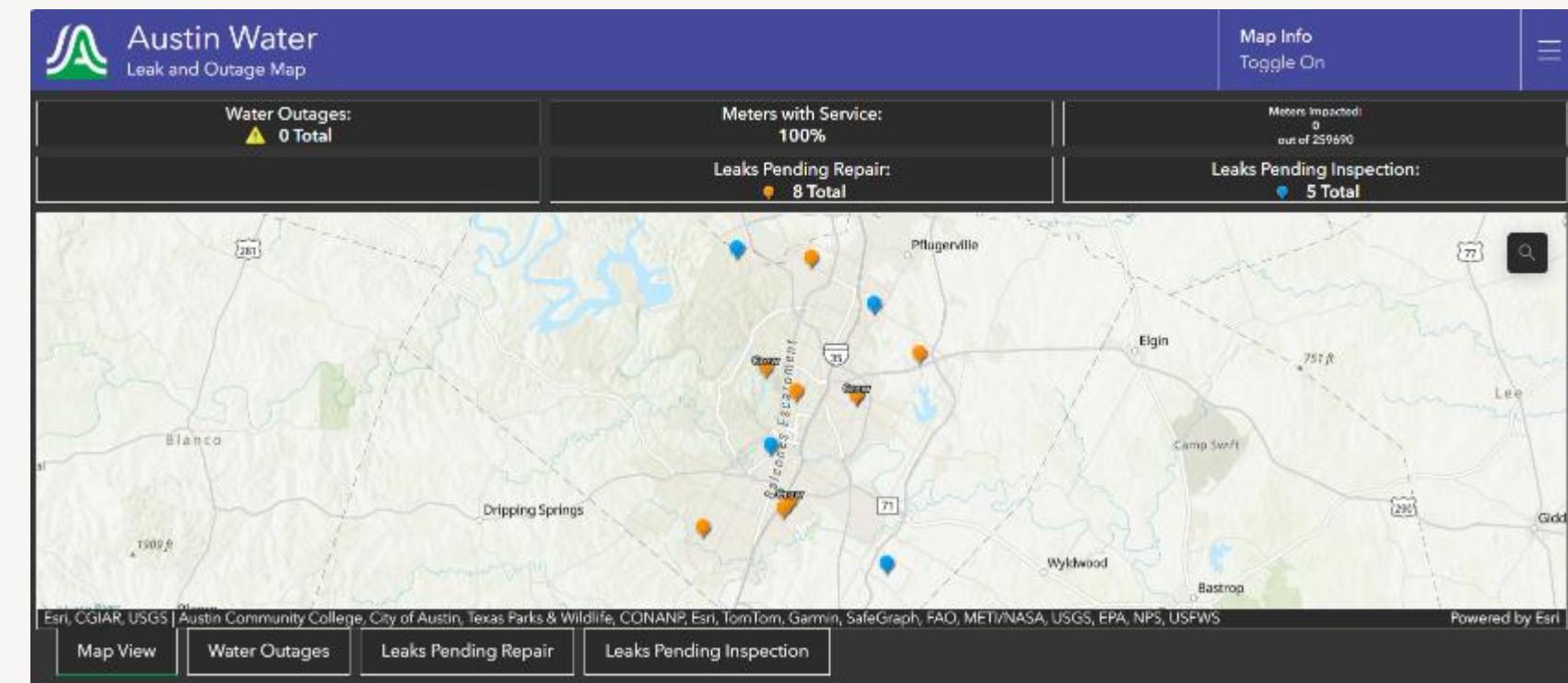
All emergency materials are available in 15 languages



Communications During Service Impacts



- Real-time outage map (always active): [AW Leak & Outage Map](#)
- Customer communication before and during unplanned, emerging events using My ATX Water portal
- Coordination with CMO for News Flash updates to Mayor and Council
- Coordination with 3-1-1 and COA Utilities



Communications During Emergencies



Deputy Incident Commander oversees communications and messaging activities for:

- AW Public Information Office
- AW Key Accounts and Wholesale Customers
- AW Customer Services Contact Center (24-7 emergency call center)

Based on OPCON level, Deputy Incident Commander sets cadence for the following:

- Media Releases
- My ATX Water Portal Notifications
- Social Media Posts
- Outbound Calls
- Internal AW Employee Communications

Deputy Incident Commander provides regular situational updates to CMO Liaison Officer, ACE and AEM.

Winter Preparedness Community Outreach



Winter Weather Preparedness messaging:

- locating your water shutoff
- weatherizing your home and pipes
- properly dripping home faucets to prevent freezing
- staying informed

Tips are available in 15 languages and include written and video instructions: [AW Cold Weather Tips](#)

Distributing tip sheets, hose bib covers and meter keys at AW and Citywide preparedness events

Winter Weather Preparedness Tips



Prepare for Freezing Weather

Locate your water shutoff
Make sure everyone in your residence knows where the water main shutoff valve is located and keep it clear of debris and obstacles at all times.

In an emergency, Austin Water recommends you always try to shut off your water at your property owner's cutoff valve first. For most homes in our service area, the property owner's shutoff valve is on your side of the water meter at the meter box. If you are not sure where, check the property inspection report from when you purchased your residence.

For renters, please consult with your property manager.

If you cannot find your shutoff valve or if it is damaged, then you should be prepared to access the City shutoff valve in the meter box. You may need a water meter key to open the meter box, during an emergency, which can be purchased at most hardware stores.

Keep out cold air

Tightly close doors and windows to the outside. Make repairs to broken or drafty windows, doors, and walls. Seal all leaks in crawl spaces and basements. Winterize unheated spaces and close garage doors for the duration of the freeze.

Exposed pipes and water heaters

Insulate pipes in unheated and drafty areas, such as an attic or garage. Also check manufacturer recommendations for your tanked and tankless water heaters. Hardware and plumbing supply stores carry insulation to help keep pipes from freezing.

Outside faucets

Turn off outside faucets. Remove all connected hoses and wrap faucets with towels or a Styrofoam insulator. Turn off and drain automatic sprinkler systems.

Prepare before leaving town

If you plan to be away during a time when freezing temperatures are possible, turn off your water at the meter and set your thermostat to 65 degrees or higher.

New My ATX Water meter box lids have been exchanged, but should be accessible with a standard meter box lid key. There is a spring mechanism that requires pressing down with the meter key before turning the key to open the lid. Note that the lid is wired to the meter inside the box. Be careful to avoid damaging these wires.

Sign up on the [myatxwater.org](#) customer portal to track water use and get alerts when water use increases for possible leaks.





Winter Preparedness Activities

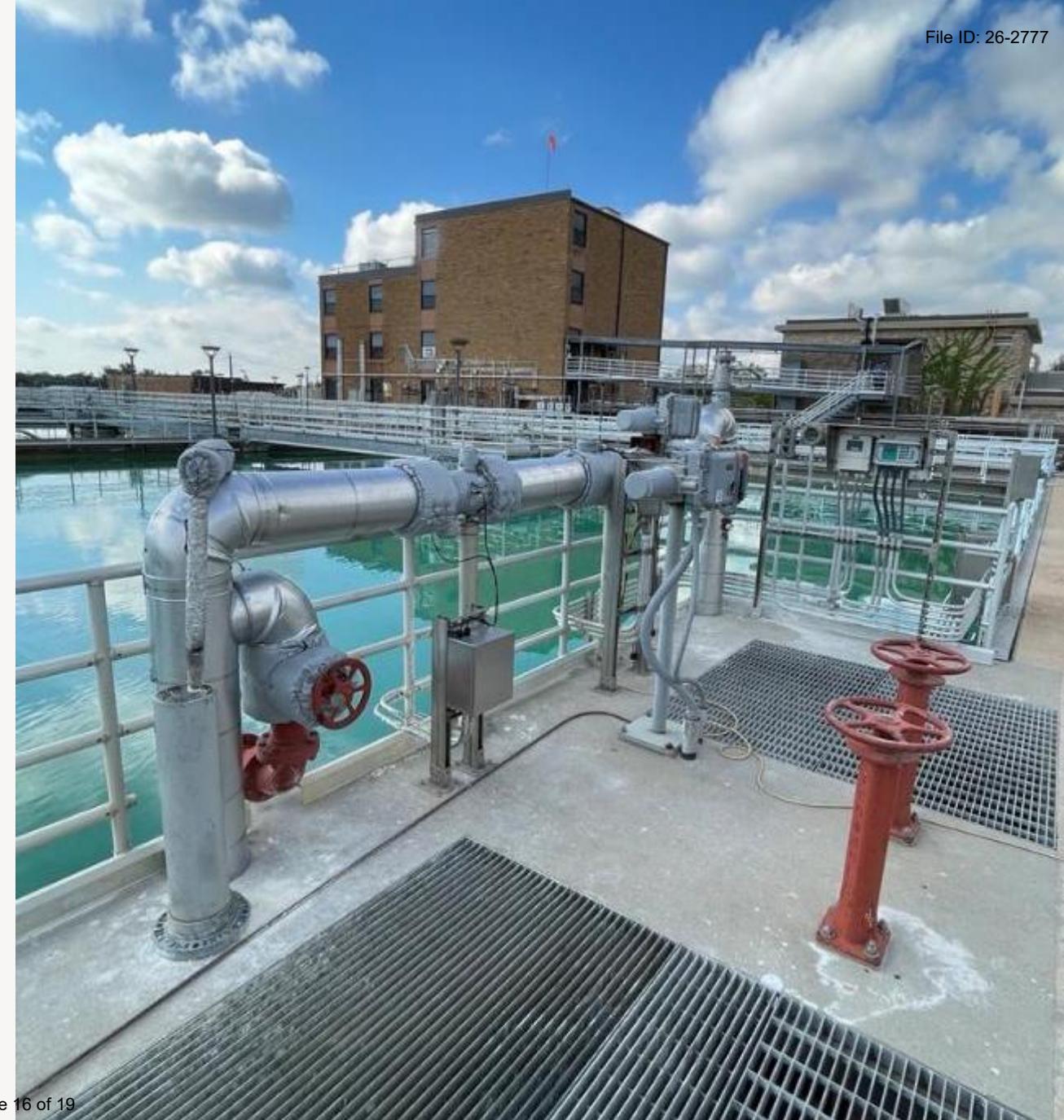
Stephanie Sue

Water Treatment Operations Manager, Austin Water

Facility Winterization Preparation

Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants

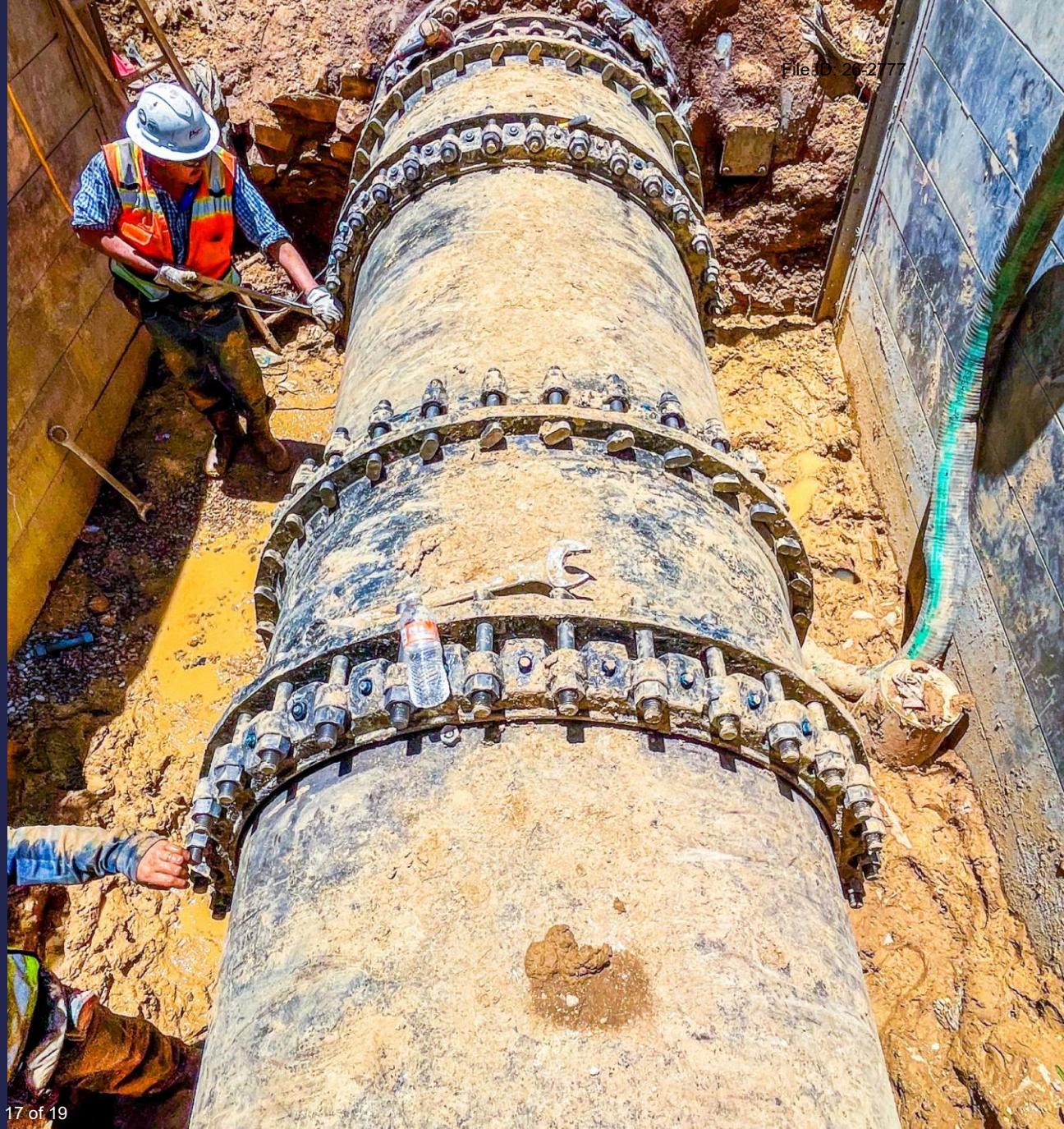
- Insulation or heat-tracing of weather-exposed critical components; inspection and repairs completed each Fall.
- Cold weather strategy for solids processing and management.
- Heaters installed in sludge hopper facilities at water treatment plants.
- Alternative routes identified for critical chemical delivery.
- Tie-in, commissioning and utilization of new 15 kV substation at Ullrich WTP Low Service Pump Station complete.
- Coordination with AE to complete maintenance activities on critical power infrastructure prior to winter season.



Facility Winterization Preparation

Distribution & Collection System (Pipelines)

- Monitoring leak trends and weather patterns to ensure preparation ahead of any expected weather event.
- 100% pressure monitoring points insulated and/or installed below-ground and waterproofed; pressure monitoring points that cannot be buried are either insulated or have heaters installed.
- Confirmation of repair parts on hand and auxiliary water tankers and totes ready for deployment ahead of winter season.
- Enhanced internal communication and awareness using VEOCI software for leak repairs that directly impact customers.



Facility Winterization Preparation

Pump & Lift Stations

- 90 fixed and portable generators for lift stations to maintain the wastewater collection system.
- Fixed generators installed at five remote, high-risk pump stations; generators staged at three critical pump stations, including Davis Lane Pump Station.
- 15 Docking Stations purchased and installed for expedited generator hook up at additional pump and lift stations.
- Controllers installed on fixed generators to allow for remote monitoring and operation.
- Generators fueled prior to winter season.
- Citywide rental generator contract used as a supplement when needed.



Building Austin's water future, together.



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