An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport

3rd November 2026 **Circular RW 18 of 2026**

Horizontal Directional Drilling (Local and Regional Roads)

Addendum to the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (the 'Purple Book')

Dear Director of Services,

The '*Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads - (the Purple Book)*' has been updated to include detailed guidance for utilities and road authorities, on the process to be followed when applying for, and approving licences, for Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) works under and/or adjacent to public roads. Please find attached forms '*HDD01 – Project Information and Submission Requirements'* and '*HDD01 – Project Information and Submission Guidance Notes'*, which set out a consistent, standardised, and national approach, to the licensing and execution of HDD works. This process has been developed following engagement with the utilities and the local authorities at the Joint Utility and Local Authority (JULA) forum. It will apply to all applications for HDD works from 16th November 2026.

1. Background and Purpose

This national process builds upon Section 6.9 of the 'Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads' (Second Edition, Rev 1, April 2017), 'The Purple Book' or 'The Guidelines', by establishing a consistent national approach to the licensing and execution of HDD works. It sets out the information requirements, submission process and assessment procedures applicable to both Licence Applicants and Road Authorities.

Section 6.9 of the *Purple Book* outlines alternative methods for the installation of services, including trenchless pipelaying techniques, while Section 6.9.1 addresses HDD in greater detail. This national process supplements those provisions by providing a standardised national framework for the assessment and licensing of HDD works within the public road.

2. **Submission Requirements**

Form '***HDD01 – Project Information and Submission Requirements***' shall be completed by the road opening licence applicant and submitted to the local authority (the Road Authority) prior to submission of a T1 notification for the main construction/HDD works. The purpose of this form is to summarise the outcome of the HDD design process. It will form a key part of the applicant's engagement with the Road Authority prior to submitting a T1 notification and will assist in determining the structure of, and overarching conditions applicable to, any subsequent licences. Guidance notes on how to complete this form is contained in '***HDD01 – Project Information and Submission Guidance Notes***'.

The form and guidance notes are available on the Department of Transport website: www.guidelines.ie and the RMO website: https://www.rmo.ie/.

3. **Application/General Notes.**

- This form is required for works under and/or adjacent to public roads where any part of the works is within 5 metres of the public road (including roadway, footway, cycleway, verge, median).
- This form is applicable to **local and regional roads only** and does not apply to national roads, which fall under the remit of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).
- Site and ground investigation works must be licensed separately and carried out in advance of the HDD design process.
- No HDD works are permitted on roads constructed over peat or bog (rampart roads). The designation of such roads is at the discretion of the Road Authority.

Any queries in relation to this circular should addressed to the Roads Management Office (RMO) at contact@rmo.ie

Please ensure that this Circular is brought to the attention of all engineering staff, particularly District and Area Engineers with responsibility for road licensing within your Local Authority.

Yours sincerely,

Liam Gallagher

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