



U.S. Department of Transportation
**Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety
Administration**
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

DATE 04/21/2026

MEMO TO FILE

From: Carolyn Nelson, P.E.
Director of Environmental Analysis & Compliance Division
carolyn.nelson@dot.gov

Subject: **Categorical Exclusion Determination**
Pipeline Safety: Standards Update – ASTM A53/A53M

FINAL ACTION

Through this Direct Final Rule (DFR), PHMSA is incorporating by reference an update to a voluntary, consensus industry technical standard already incorporated by reference within the pipeline safety regulations (49 CFR parts 192 and 195). Specifically, PHMSA is updating the referenced edition of industry standard ASTM A53/A53M, Standard Specification for Pipe, Steel, Black and Hot-Dipped, Zinc-Coated, Welded and Seamless, to the 2024 edition (ASTM A53/A53M). References to the 2024 edition of this standard will replace the existing references in 49 CFR 192.113, appendix B to part 192, and 49 CFR 195.106(e) to ASTM A53/A53M–22, Standard Specification for Pipe, Steel, Black and Hot-Dipped, Zinc-Coated, Welded and Seamless, approved July 1, 2022. This updated standard will maintain or improve public safety, prevent regulatory confusion, reduce compliance burdens on stakeholders, and satisfy a mandate in the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA) of 1995.

APPLICABLE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Categorical exclusions (CE) are categories of actions that the agency has determined normally do not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and therefore do not require either an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS). [DOT Order 5610.1D](#), DOT’s current National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures, notes in paragraph 9(f) that “[a]n OA may apply a CE established in another OA’s procedures.” PHMSA coordinated with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to determine that the following FHWA CE is applicable to the action described above and can be used by PHMSA per Section 9(f) of DOT Order 5610.1D:

*Promulgation of rules, regulations, and directives.*¹

¹ 23 CFR 771.117(c)(20)

UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Based on the scope of the action, PHMSA has determined that this rulemaking action does not meet the criteria for unusual circumstances listed in 23 CFR 771.117(b), which would require PHMSA to conduct appropriate environmental studies to determine if the CE classification is proper.

DETERMINATION

PHMSA analyzed the DFR and determined that the rulemaking will not adversely affect safety and will not significantly affect the quality of the human and natural environment. Based on the information provided in the DFR, including a review of unusual circumstances, PHMSA finds the final action qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion in accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. § 4332, DOT Order 5610.1D, Departmentwide National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures, and 23 CFR 771.

Approved by the Environmental Analysis and Compliance Division:
