

Texarkana Water Utilities

Press Release: Temporary Change to Water Disinfection Procedures

Texarkana Water Utilities (TWU) will begin a temporary change to the method of disinfecting our drinking water beginning February 5 and lasting about eight weeks. The water will remain safe to drink throughout the process. TWU normally uses chloramine, a mixture of ammonia and chlorine, to disinfect water. Beginning Monday, February 5 and for approximately eight weeks TWU will use chlorine only, also known as “free chlorine”. The periodic temporary conversion from chloramine to free chlorine is a widely used preventative maintenance procedure for municipal water systems in both Texas and Arkansas. TWU previously performed this procedure in March 2015.

Over time minerals may attach to pipes and release when there are changes in pressure that may result in discoloration. Other processes such as nitrification and the growth of biofilm may also occur in water distribution pipes. The biofilm growth can cause a reduction in the effectiveness of residual disinfectants over time. The use of free chlorine will help cleanse the lines, reduce the occurrence of nitrification and biofilm, and ensure that we provide quality water for the customers served by TWU.

Citizens may see more flushing of fire hydrants by TWU staff during this process. Certain water lines with low flow must be flushed more often to ensure the free chlorinated water is adequately moving through the water distribution system.

Free chlorine is a stronger disinfectant than chloramine. As a result, some water-users may experience a slight change in the aesthetics of their water during the conversion, including a noticeable “chlorine odor” and slight discoloration. This should lessen after a couple of weeks and does not affect the safety of the water supply.

TWU encourages kidney dialysis patients to speak with their equipment supplier; different types of equipment may have varying needs and require adjustments.

The processes most aquariums have for removing chloramines from water should be the same with free chlorine and need no adjustments. Even so, fish tank operators are encouraged to confirm that with their equipment supplier. Local pet stores have also been informed of the conversion.

TWU will monitor chlorine levels and water-quality standards in the distribution system on a daily basis to ensure the safety of the water and that all state and regulatory standards are met.

All TWU customers, including residential, retail and wholesale customers, as well as medical facilities and industrial customers, have been, or will be, mailed a written notice of the temporary change in disinfection procedures prior to initiating the process.

A list of frequently asked questions and answers will be posted on TWU’s website www.txkusa.org/twu. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Rick Barton, Water Production Manager, or Jason Gallagher, Laboratory Supervisor at 903-798-3850.