



Texarkana Water Utilities “Free Chlorine Conversion” Frequently Asked Questions

What is a “free chlorine conversion”?

A free chlorine conversion is a process by which a water system switches its disinfection process from chloramines (a combination of chlorine and ammonia) to free chlorine to improve the long-term quality of its drinking water.

Why is Texarkana Water Utilities implementing a “free chlorine conversion”?

To improve the overall water quality in our distribution system by preventing or eliminating discoloration problems from minerals, biofilm or nitrification. Texarkana Water Utilities has been able to maintain excellent water quality for its customers without having to flush excessively. Excessive flushing to maintain water quality is one of the most significant triggers that water systems use in determining whether a “free chlorine conversion” is warranted. Texarkana Water Utilities is working towards the regular scheduling of “free chlorine conversion” to significantly improve the quality of our drinking water, while also reducing our water loss to flushing.

Is this the first time that Texarkana Water Utilities has implemented a free chlorine conversion?

No; previously March-April 2015, February-March 2018, and October-November 2019.

Are “free chlorine conversions” a common practice among water systems?

Yes. This is a common industry standard for preventative maintenance in drinking water distribution systems. Many utilities throughout both states and across the country that use chloramines for their primary distribution disinfectant convert to free chlorine on an “as needed” basis. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) endorse and support this procedure.

How long will the “free chlorine conversion” last?

The duration of the “free chlorine conversion” will be approximately 8 weeks (August 4 to September 13, 2020).

Does the “free chlorine conversion” pose any health risks? Will the water be safe to drink and use?

The process is entirely safe and poses no health risks to customers. The water is safe to drink, and customers can use the water as normal.

Will I need to do anything differently during the conversion?

No action is necessary during the conversion. Customers may drink and use their water as normal.

Why all the flushing?

Texarkana Water Utilities must directionally flush to maintain clear water for our customers and to ensure the free chlorine conversion has made it to the far reaches of our distribution system. Flushing should significantly subside after the termination of the conversion.

I have low water pressure. What do I do?

If you are completely out of water, or have extremely low water pressures, contact the Texarkana Water Utilities Service Center immediately at **(903) 798-3880**. If your water pressure is just lower than normal, but is adequate to carry out your daily routine, please be patient, as this pressure drop will likely be short-lived. Water pressures should return to normal after flushing has been terminated in your area, and subsequent to the termination of the conversion.

I have discolored water. What do I do?

Flush toilets, bathtubs and faucets until your water clears. If it does not clear with minor indoor flushing, contact the Texarkana Water Utilities Service Center at **(903) 798-3880**, so that they can determine whether additional flushing in your area is warranted.

My water has a strong chlorine smell. What is going on?

A chlorine smell is very normal during the conversion period, as the disinfectant is transitioning from chloramines to free chlorine. Chlorine concentrations maintained during the conversion will be well within TCEQ and EPA standards and will be entirely safe to consume and use as normal.

Will my clothing be safe in the laundry?

Yes, but as a safeguard do not wash clothing at times of known discoloration of water. Some people verify that their water is not discolored by running 1-2 inches of water in the bathtub to check for discoloration prior to running a load of laundry.

What do I need to know if I am on dialysis?

All medical facilities and dialysis centers have been, or will be, given advanced notice of the "free chlorine conversion". As a precautionary measure you should consult your doctor if you have any questions about your dialysis treatment. Generally, more issues arise for systems converting to chloramines for the first time, Texarkana Water Utilities has used chloramines successfully for over 30 years, and as such medical facilities use proper pre-filters to remove the chloramine.

I have a fish tank. How will it affect my fish?

Processes in place to remove chloramines in water will remove free chlorine. No change or adjustment should be needed. However, Texarkana Water Utilities suggest that you contact your fish supplier and follow your equipment manufacturer's recommendations.

I have additional questions, who should I contact?

Robert Bean
Laboratory Supervisor
903-798-3850
Rick Barton
Water Production Manager
903-798-3850