

Water Quality Preventative Maintenance Program

Overview

In a continuing effort to improve water quality, the following water utilities: Archdale, Burlington, Greensboro, High Point, Jamestown, Randleman, Reidsville, and the Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority will conduct a routine water quality preventative maintenance program beginning on June 27, 2016 and ending August 1, 2016. This process will involve a temporary switch from present chloramines to chlorine in order to optimize water quality in our distribution systems.

Why is drinking water disinfected?

Disinfection is critical to protect the public from disease-causing microorganisms, by lowering the exposure rates to infectious diseases. Throughout the years, chlorine has been extremely successful in protecting water from harmful bacterial and viral contamination. However, when chlorine reacts with naturally occurring materials in the water it forms new compounds known as disinfectant by-products (DBPs). The two known, DBPs trihalomethanes (THMs), and haloacetic acids (HAAs) are suspected carcinogens when present at elevated levels and consumed over long periods of time. New drinking water regulations require utilities to maintain a lower concentration of DBPs, lower bacterial counts or coliform occurrences, and maintain better disinfectant residual throughout the distribution system. Chloramines, a combination of chlorine and ammonia, are currently being used by the water utilities mentioned to reduce the amount of DBPs produced.

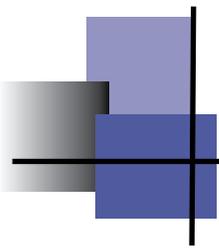
Special Precautions

For most individuals, there will be no negative effects as a result of the change however, precautions must be taken to remove chlorine as well as chloramines. Both chlorinated and chloraminated water are safe for drinking, bathing, cooking, and other general uses. There are three groups that need to take precautions: kidney dialysis patients, fish tanks and ponds owners, and some businesses that use water in their production process.

Similar to chloramines, chlorine can harm kidney dialysis patients during the dialysis process if not removed before water enters the bloodstream. Humans neutralize water in our digestive system before it reaches the bloodstream. Fish absorb chloramines and chlorine directly into the bloodstream through gills, which inhibits the ability of the red blood cells to carry oxygen. Businesses that use water in any manufacturing process, such as food or beverage preparation, commercial laundering operations, laboratory procedures, seafood handling or any other processes in which water characteristics must be carefully controlled and maintained by the company, may require adjustments to their current filtration and treatment systems.

Why change disinfection treatment process?

The periodic water quality preventative maintenance program will be performed to maintain water quality in the water system. The process change is strongly recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State to preserve water quality by ensuring persistent disinfection levels exist in the distribution system.



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What customers should expect during the transition?

The switch to chlorine is scheduled to start on June 27, 2016 and continue for approximately one month. By August 1, 2016, the transition should be complete and disinfection with chloramines will be resumed. During switch, some users may notice temporary taste, and odor differences. This is a normal part of the process and customers should be reassured that water quality will not be affected. It is recommended that customers continue to remove chloramines and chlorine from water prior to use in the kidney dialysis process, fish aquariums and ponds, and with some types of manufacturing practices.

Kidney dialysis facilities and users of home dialysis machines along with fish, pond and aquarium owners and specialized business owners are advised to seek professional advice concerning the removal methods for chlorine and chloramines. The return to chlorine-only disinfection is not expected to cause any significant increases in levels of DBPs. The water will continue to meet Federal and State standards for drinking water and is safe for consumption and use. System flushing may result in minor discoloration of your water. Customers are encouraged to let the water run for a few minutes until water becomes clear.

Additional Resources

Environmental Protection Agency

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water>

Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791