

May 30, 2024 — The Northeast Texas Municipal Water District (NETMWD) will temporarily change the disinfectant in its water treatment process from June 6 through July 3, 2024. This change is necessary to maintain the regional system and year-round water quality.

“Delivering safe and high-quality water to our customers and protecting public health is, and always will be the highest priority” said Dominik Sobieraj, NETMWD Chief Operations Officer. “The procedures and techniques used in our water treatment process are considered the best and most effective process to ensure that the communities we serve have safe, reliable drinking water at the lowest cost.”

Disinfection is a critical part of the water treatment process that keeps drinking water free of harmful microorganisms, such as parasites and viruses. NETMWD’s Tanner Water Treatment Plant uses a disinfection process where the water is treated, and then chloramine disinfectant (chlorine + ammonia) is added to maintain the water quality as it journeys through miles of pipes to homes and businesses. During the temporary change, NETMWD suspends adding ammonia and uses chlorine only to keep the water disinfected. This temporary change helps prepare the pipes for summer when hotter temperatures can increase the potential for bacterial growth.

“When conditions inside water pipelines negatively affect chloramine disinfectant, a temporary chlorine conversion is commonly used. This process is critical for maintaining the right conditions inside both district and customer pipelines. It greatly assists maintaining water quality throughout the year,” continued Sobieraj. “This water delivery system maintenance is a common practice and does not increase the amount of chlorine. Throughout the process, water remains safe to drink. Our water continues to meet or surpass all safe drinking water standards.”

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, this temporary conversion is a common practice for many water providers using chloramines for disinfection. NETMWD follows the specified guidelines set forth by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) on how public water systems disinfect drinking water.

The absence of ammonia during these few weeks may make the chlorine disinfectant more noticeable to some people. Simple steps to minimize taste, odor, or skin sensitivities include placing a pitcher of water in the refrigerator overnight or adding a slice of citrus to the water. Adding a crushed 1000 mg Vitamin C tablet to bath water will neutralize the chlorine.

NETMWD is conducting this temporary change in water disinfectant to continue to meet safe drinking water standards. During the change, the communities served by NETMWD may help move the chlorine-disinfected water through the system faster by flushing water from fire hydrants. The combination of converting to chlorine disinfectant and flushing pipes helps maintain the system and safe water year-round.

What is Free Chlorine Maintenance?

Free Chlorine Maintenance is a temporary process where the usual disinfectant, chloramine, is switched to free chlorine.

This is a routine maintenance practice that helps ensure the highest quality of water by cleaning and flushing the

distribution system.

Why is this necessary?

The conversion to free chlorine and the subsequent flushing of the water system helps:

- Remove biofilm and other organic material from pipes.
- Enhance the overall effectiveness of the disinfectant.
- Ensure the water system remains clean and safe year-round.

What to Expect:

• **Increased Flushing:** You may notice a higher number of hydrants running during this period. This is part of the

flushing process to move chlorine-disinfected water through the system quickly and efficiently.

• **Water Taste and Odor:** Some residents may notice a temporary change in the taste or smell of their water. This is normal and **not harmful**.

• **Water Safety:** The water remains safe to use and drink throughout this process.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Is my water safe to drink during the conversion?

• Yes, the water remains safe to drink and use.

2. Why does my water taste or smell different?

• The temporary change to free chlorine can cause a noticeable chlorine taste or smell. This is normal and will

dissipate after the maintenance is complete