



City of Rosenberg Utilities Department

Frequently Asked Questions

Water Distribution System Free Chlorine Maintenance Program

What is the "Water Distribution System Free Chlorine Maintenance Program?"

This program is a temporary conversion from chloramine to free chlorine disinfection, and is a water industry routine maintenance measure designed to keep water mains clean and free of potentially harmful bacteria throughout the year.

Can I drink the water during this maintenance program?

The water will continue to meet Federal and State standards for safe drinking water during this program; however, customers may notice a difference in taste and/or smell. Each individual has his or her own sensitivity level to the taste and/or odor of free chlorine. Many detect no change at all. The chlorine taste and smell during the first two weeks of the maintenance program is normal and poses no health risk.

Why is the maintenance program being conducted?

This is a planned treatment designed to provide additional protection to our customers against bacteria in the water supply. Many utilities using chloramine disinfection find it helpful to periodically switch to a free chlorine treatment program to help maintain system integrity.

When will the program be conducted?

The maintenance program is planned for **June 1, 2026 through June 22, 2026**. This duration is based on recommendations that the maintenance period should last for about three weeks. If there are any changes in the duration of the program, customers will be notified.

Who will be affected?

The program will include all customers of the City of Rosenberg Utilities Water System.

Are free chlorine and chloraminated water safe?

Yes, both forms of chlorine are safe for people and animals to drink, for cooking and bathing, watering the garden, and for all other common uses. However, precautions must be taken to remove or neutralize chloramines and free chlorine during the kidney dialysis processing, in the preparation of water for fish tanks and ponds, and for businesses requiring highly-processed water. Most customers will not need to take any precautions as the water remains safe to drink and is treated according to both state and federal standards.



People and businesses that normally take special precautions to remove disinfectants like chloramines from tap water, such as dialysis centers, medical facilities and aquatic pet owners, should continue to take the same precautions during the temporary switch from chloramines to free chlorine.

Kidney Dialysis - Just like chloramines, free chlorine must be removed from water used in kidney dialysis machines. We advise customers who are dialysis patients to call their physicians or dialysis centers if there are any questions.

Fish Owners - Like chloramines, free chlorine is toxic to fish. Fish owners need to remove chlorine, ammonia and chloramines from the water before use with tropical fish. Local pet stores carry water conditioners that remove chloramines and free chlorine. If customers have questions, we recommend contacting their pet store for information and detailed instructions.

Why are we switching to free chlorine so often?

The frequency with which utilities switch to free chlorine depends upon the specific conditions of that system including climate and system demands. Free chlorine maintenance is practiced more often in warmer climates such as Texas, especially during the summer. The City of Rosenberg Utilities Department has determined that routine free chlorine maintenance should be practiced once and/or twice per year to promote a healthy distribution system given the low consumption during cold weather, and decreasing water demands for irrigation. This is consistent with the practices of other water utilities in the region.

Do the local or regional distribution systems have a bacteria problem?

There are no indications of bacteriological contamination problems. The flushing and disinfection program is designed to maintain distribution system water quality and minimize the potential for any future problem. The maintenance program will include daily testing to monitor water quality and to measure the effectiveness of the program.

What is free chlorine?

Free chlorine is a slightly stronger disinfectant than chloramines, and can be used to remove more resistant organisms that may be found in the water distribution system.

What is combined chlorine or chloramine?

Chloramine is a Federal and State approved disinfectant used in drinking water to remove bacteria and viruses that can make you sick. It is made up of chlorine and ammonia.



Why does City of Rosenberg Utilities use chloramines most of the year?

While chlorine is an effective disinfectant, using chlorine alone can create disinfection byproducts, which are regulated by the US Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, free chlorine may cause taste and odor in the water while chloramines tend to be more palatable.

Will customers notice any changes in the water during the program?

Utilities customers may experience a difference in taste and/or smell in the water during this temporary change in treatment. Initially during the first week of the maintenance program, the changes will likely be more apparent but will later decrease as the system adjusts to the change. These are normal occurrences and carry no negative health effects.

Why all the flushing?

In order to change the process and facilitate rapid system conversion, we must flush to spread the free-chlorinated water throughout the system.

What changes can be expected once the routine maintenance is completed?

Local distribution systems will be flushed to clear the chlorinated water as chloraminated water is reintroduced to the system. During this process, customers may see a temporary variation in color. Running water at the tap for one to two minutes should remedy this temporary occurrence.

If I have questions, who should I call for more information?

For more information, please call the Customer Service Department at 832-595-3400.