



2021 Annual Temporary Conversion to Free Chlorine and Water System Flushing Program FAQ

1. What are chloramines?

Chloramines are a disinfectant used in drinking water to remove bacteria and viruses.

2. What is free chlorine?

Free chlorine is a more aggressive disinfectant than chloramines, making it ideal for addressing more resistant bacteria and viruses.

3. What is the purpose of converting from chloramines to free chlorine each year?

The water that the Rural Bardwell Water Supply Corporation (RBWSC) provides its customers is purchased from Rockett Special Utility District (SUD). Rockett SUD uses chloramines in their water treatment processes during most of the year. Using chloramines is a better long-term option because they remain in the water distribution system longer and produce lower levels of disinfection by-products. Free chlorine is a more aggressive disinfectant, and this temporary change in the water treatment process helps prevent bacteria from becoming overly resistant.

4. How long will free chlorine be used in the water system this year?

One Month: October 1, 2021 to October 31, 2021.

5. Will my tap water taste different while free chlorine is used in the water treatment process?

Some customers may notice a slight chemical smell similar to that of water in a swimming pool. Each individual customer has his or her own sensitivity level to the taste and/or odor of free chlorine. Many detect no difference.

6. Is water treated with free chlorine and chloraminated water safe?

Yes, both are safe and effective. RBWSC is in regular communication with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and strictly adheres to the TCEQ guidelines on minimum and maximum chlorine levels. Both forms of chlorinated water are safe for people and animals to drink, for cooking and bathing, watering the garden, and all other common uses. However, precautions must be taken to remove or neutralize chloramines and free chlorine during the kidney dialysis process, in the preparation of water for fish tanks and ponds, and for businesses requiring highly processed water. A de-chlorination procedure optimized for the removal of chloramines will equally remove free chlorine.

7. Why are free chlorine and chloramines harmful for dialysis patients?

Both free chlorine and chloramines may harm kidney dialysis patients during the dialysis process if it is not removed from water before passing into the bloodstream. The pretreatment scheme used for the dialysis units must include some means, such as a charcoal filter, for removing the chloramine and free chlorine. Medical facilities should also determine if additional precautions are required for other medical equipment. Like everyone else, dialysis patients may drink water treated with either free chlorine or chloramines because the digestive process neutralizes the chemicals before they enter the bloodstream.

8. Will chloramines affect household plumbing, pipes and/or water heaters?

Some older household plumbing and water heaters may incorporate rubber materials and parts, which can degrade over time. Ask for chloramines-resistant parts, which are readily available at hardware supply stores or from a plumber, when replacing rubber plumbing materials. Chloramines-resistant parts will be effective regardless of the type of chlorine used.

9. How can I remove chlorine from my water?

Free chlorine can be removed by boiling or adding a bit of lemon juice to your tap water. You can also fill a container with water and leave it open to allow chlorine to naturally dissipate over a 24-hour period.

10. Will my fish be affected?

Chloraminated water may be toxic to fish. If you have a fish tank, please make sure that the chemicals or filters that you are using are designated for use in water that has been treated with chloramines. You may also need to change the type of filter that you use for the fish tank.

11. Will pool owners need to treat water differently?

Pool owners must maintain the same chlorine level in water treated with either free chlorine or chloramines to prevent algal and bacterial growth. Pool supply stores can provide more information.

12. What does “hydrant or valve flushing” mean?

RBWSC personnel will forcefully draw the chlorinated water through flush valves located all around the service area for several weeks. Valve flushing also helps to wash out sediments that have collected in water mains throughout the distribution system. Additionally, the flushing process ensures valves are in good working order.

13. Will I see a drop in water pressure due to the flushing?

Most customers will not see a drop in water pressure. If a change in pressure does occur, it usually lasts for less than half an hour. If you experience a significant loss of water pressure lasting longer than 30 minutes, please contact our office at (800) 338-6425.

14. Will hydrant or valve flushing in my area cause cloudiness or sediment in my water?

Since the flushing process can stir up sediments in water mains, you may notice occasional short-term cloudiness in your water. If your tap water is cloudy, open your faucet and allow water to flow until the clarity improves. If your tap water remains cloudy for an extended period of time, please contact our office at (800) 338-6425.