

Frequently Asked Questions for Water Line Flushing and the Temporary Conversion to Free Chlorine from Chloramines.

Q: Why are you flushing?

A: In some areas water moves very slow through the distribution pipes. Slow movement may cause sediment to build up over time resulting in a film to accumulate along the pipe walls. Flushing lines cause the water to move very quickly, cleaning the pipes and assuring consistently good water quality.

Q: Isn't flushing a waste of water?

A: No. The overall increase in water use for flushing is small compared to the amount of water used during the year. In some areas, it may be possible to use the flushed water to clean storm drain inlets, collection boxes, and underground piping.

Q: Why are you changing the water disinfectant from Chloramines to Free Chlorine?

A: Temporarily converting from chloramines to free chlorine is done to accompany the flushing process. Overtime sediments accumulate in water pipes. If not controlled, this can reduce the quality of your drinking water. Material in water pipe can become accustomed to the chloramine disinfectant that is routinely used. Switching to free chlorine, which is a stronger disinfectant, for a short period of time, ensures the quality of your water during the flushing process. Using fire hydrants to conduct a system-wide flushing of our distribution mains, combined with the disinfectant change is a very effective method for cleaning out this sediment and other built up material. This procedure is a standard practice used nationwide.

Q: Is there anything I will notice during the conversion?

A: You may notice a slight chlorine taste and smell to water during this four-week period. This is normal and poses no health risk. If you would like to minimize this odor, you could put a pitcher of water in the refrigerator until cold and then drink.

You may also see our crews with fire hydrants open and water flowing. This is part of the water main flushing activities. The flushing may result in some increased cloudiness, color or sediment in your drinking water for a short period of time.

Q: How long will it last?

A: The Conversion will last for 30-45 days to get to the outer most points of the distribution system.

Q: Why is it being done now?

A: It is our intention to have the process completed while the campus population is low and complete the process prior to the Fall academic semester, beginning in August.

Q: Is this the first time you have temporarily switched the disinfectant?

A: We have converted from chloramines to free chlorine previously. We expect this process to continue on an annual or bi-annual basis.

Q: Do other water systems make this temporary disinfectant switch?

A: Yes. This is a common industry practice. Many utilities throughout the Country that use chloramines as a distribution system disinfectant, convert to free chlorine annually for water line flushing.

Q: How will this temporary switch affect kidney dialysis procedures?

A: The processes already in place to remove chloramines in the water will remove free chlorine. No change or adjustment should be needed. However if you have any concerns, please contact your healthcare provider for more information.

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

A: The processes already in place to remove chloramines in the water will remove free chlorine. No change or adjustment should be needed. However if you have any concerns, please contact a pet store or aquarium expert for more information.

Q: Will there be anything special needed for switching from free chlorine to chloramines after the flushing period for dialysis centers or fish tank owners?

A: All methods for removing chloramines will also remove chlorine, but the reverse is not true. OSU switched from using free chlorine to chloramines as the primary disinfectant in the 1990s. Affected parties residing in our service area should have already adjusted for chloramines. No adjustment should be needed for this temporary conversion to free chlorine, or from free to chloramines, however be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for your de-chlorination equipment.

Q: Who can I contact with additional questions or concerns?

A: Questions or concerns can be directed to the OSU Water Treatment Plant at 405-372-5524.