



**NORTH
TEXAS
MUNICIPAL
WATER
DISTRICT**

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NTMWD assures public that water is safe and complies with regulations

Response comes following questions about chlorine used in treatment process

WYLIE, TX – March 15, 2018: The North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) officials assure the public that the processes used to treat and maintain the safety and quality of the district’s drinking meet federal and state standards. NTMWD is conducting a temporary 30-day proactive system maintenance process that is accepted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The maintenance period ends March 26.

During this period, residents may experience a stronger smell of chlorine, however NTMWD has not increased the amount of chlorine in the water. The only change during this temporary maintenance period has been the discontinuation of ammonia while maintaining all other treatment processes. The odor will be more noticeable due to the lack of ammonia.

The most commonly used disinfectants for water treatment are chlorine, chloramine (chlorine and ammonia) and ozone. NTMWD, like many water providers, uses all three. Ozone is the most powerful disinfection process and chlorine is used to ensure the water remains safe as it moves through the pipes throughout the regional and local systems.

California environmental lawyer Erin Brockovich has raised questions about the use of chlorine maintenance by water systems, including NTMWD, Austin, Houston and Tyler.

“Water quality and safety is a top priority, and we work closely with officials in Member and Customer Cities, federal and state agencies to fulfill our mission,” said Mick Rickman, Deputy Director of Operations and Maintenance at NTMWD. “This is a safe and scientifically proven method to ensure that treated water remains safe as it moves throughout the distribution system,” Rickman added.

Routine monitoring of bacteria, disinfectant residuals, nitrate, nitrite and many other parameters occurs during the maintenance period at the treatment plant and in the distribution systems. Samples are collected by TCEQ-licensed water operators and analyzed in appropriately accredited laboratories. NTMWD has performed process control monitoring at its treatment plant for disinfection byproducts including trihalomethanes (THMs). The results for multiple samples have been less than 28 parts per billion (ppb) which is significantly lower than the EPA Maximum Contaminant Level of 80 ppb. The results of all testing are within federal and state guidelines. NTMWD water remains safe for consumption and use.

For answers to more [FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#), visit www.NTMWD.com.

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Facts About Chlorine Maintenance

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Frequently Asked Questions about Free Chlorine Maintenance

WYLIE, TX - March, 2018

What is NTMWD doing to ensure Water Quality?

Ensuring water quality is a collaborative effort between the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) and our Member Cities and customers. Providing safe and reliable drinking water is a top priority, and hundreds of samples are monitored and tested each day to ensure that drinking water meets regulatory, health, and aesthetic standards set by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

NTMWD utilizes a multi-barrier approach to treat our surface water. The NTMWD water treatment process is considered state of the art, and is optimized to reduce organic material and the use of chlorine. In fact, the NTMWD has been recognized by the TCEQ's Texas Optimization Program (TOP) for the superior performance of its treatment facilities in exceeding state and federal drinking water standards. More information on the TOP program can be found here: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/swmor/top>

The NTMWD disinfection process is designed to eliminate bacteria and viruses in the water and distribution system. The most commonly used disinfectants for water treatment are chlorine, chloramine (chlorine + ammonia) and ozone. NTMWD uses all three, and is one of the largest fully ozonated water treatment facilities in the world. By using ozone, the amount of chlorine needed during the treatment process is greatly reduced. As a result, the amount of disinfection by-products is also greatly reduced. However, ozone is not long-lasting disinfectant. The only disinfectants that are able to provide long-lasting disinfection in the distribution are chlorine and chloramine. There are no other alternatives. Chloramines are longer-lasting than chlorine, and allow water to remain disinfected to the far reaches of the distribution system. Also, the use of chloramines has been scientifically proven to reduce the formation of disinfection by-products. Therefore, the NTMWD uses chloramines to facilitate disinfection throughout the distribution system.

Why is this maintenance procedure necessary?

Studies by the Water Research Foundation have found that a periodic chlorine maintenance period is a preventative measure to reduce the potential of nitrification occurring in the distribution system during warmer temperatures. The chlorine maintenance, in conjunction with system flushing, is designed to remove any biofilm that may have formed since the last maintenance period. Chlorine must be used for this preventative maintenance because it is a stronger disinfectant than chloramine.

The temporary use of chlorine is a standard industry practice that is used to maintain water quality in the distribution system. This practice is considered safe and is utilized by water utilities that serve almost half of the U.S. population.

Is testing done during this period?

Routine monitoring of bacteria, disinfectant residuals, nitrate, nitrite and many other parameters occurs during the maintenance period at the treatment plant and in the distribution systems. Samples are collected by TCEQ licensed water operators and analyzed in appropriately accredited laboratories. NTMWD has performed process control monitoring at our treatment plant for trihalomethanes (THMs). The results for multiple samples have been less than 28 parts per billion (ppb) which is significantly lower than the EPA Maximum Contaminant Level of 80 ppb. The results of all testing are within federal and state guidelines. Our water remains safe to drink.

Where can I find more information?

More information about water treatment and the use of chlorine as a disinfectant, including free chlorine maintenance, can be found on the following websites:

TCEQ - <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/disinfection/nitrification.html>

EPA - <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/chloramines-drinking-water>

WRF - <https://www.awwa.org/portals/0/files/resources/publicaffairs/pdfs/monocommkit.pdf>

CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/public/chloramine-disinfection.html>

CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/public/chlorine-disinfection.html>

More information about NTMWD water quality, including test results is available on the NTMWD website at: <https://www.ntmwd.com/water-quality-reports/>

How does this affect my water?

Although users may experience a stronger smell of chlorine during the maintenance period, the water is safe to consume. During the maintenance period, the amount of chlorine in the water has not actually increased. However, because ammonia is not being used, the chlorine odor is more noticeable. Disinfectant residuals during the maintenance period remain below the EPA Maximum Allowable Level of 4 mg/L.