

# Temporary Free Chlorine Conversion 2024

Fort Bend County WCID No. 2 is temporarily converting the disinfectant used in the water treatment process from chloramine to free chlorine. The duration of the free chlorine conversion is approximately 30 days and will begin on June 3, 2024. Fort Bend County WCID No. 2 will return to chloramine disinfection on June 26, 2024.

## What to expect during the temporary change

Generally, there are no noticeable changes in water quality as a result of this temporary conversion. However, some individuals may notice taste and odor changes and a slight discoloration to the water, primarily during the transition period. Noticeable water quality changes associated with conversions are normally short-lived and are not public health risks. The potable water during the process is safe and will meet all national and state water quality requirements.

## Why is this necessary?

Fort Bend County WCID no, 2 water system currently uses chloramines (a combination of free chlorine and ammonia) to disinfect its drinking water supply prior to customer distribution. This is a reliable disinfection process that has been recommended by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for systems treating surface water.

It is common industry practice to periodically convert chloramines back to free chlorine to help improve and maintain the highest water quality standards. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the TCEQ support this process as a necessary and effective measure for maintaining water quality.

The District will implement directional flushing, combined with routine water quality monitoring to maintain the highest water quality for customers during the conversion.

**The water is safe for people and animals to drink, for cooking and bathing, watering the garden, and for all other common uses.**

However, people and businesses that normally take special precautions to remove chloramines from tap water, such as dialysis centers, medical facilities, and aquatic pet owners, should confirm whether pretreatment adjustments are necessary during the temporary switch from chloramines to free chlorine.

## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### What is chloramine disinfectant?

Chloramine is a disinfectant used in drinking water to inactivate bacteria and viruses. It is typically used for water systems sourced from surface water.

### What is free chlorine disinfectant?

Free chlorine is a disinfectant used in drinking water to inactivate bacteria and viruses. It is typically used for water systems sourced from groundwater.

### What is a free chlorine conversion?

A free chlorine conversion is a process by which a public water system temporarily converts its disinfection process from chloramines (a combination of chlorine and ammonia) to free chlorine (chlorine only) in order to improve the long-term quality of its drinking water.

### What is the purpose and/or benefit of a free chlorine conversion?

Chloramines are preferred long-term choice for systems on surface water because they produce lower levels of disinfectant byproducts like trihalomethanes when chlorine mixes with natural organic substances in water. However, prolonged use of chloramine coupled with other factors that can affect water quality, such as high temperatures, may result in the growth and/or persistence of organic matter within the pipes of the distribution system. Though harmless when consumed by humans, this organic matter can introduce unwanted taste and odor, and hinder the ability to maintain an adequate disinfectant residual. A temporary conversion to free chlorine, partnered with flushing activities, clears distribution pipes of this organic matter and improves the quality of your water overall.

### Are free chlorine conversions a common practice among water systems?

Yes. Free chlorine conversions are a common industry practice for preventative maintenance in drinking water distribution systems. Many utilities throughout the state and country that use chloramines for their primary distribution disinfectant periodically convert back to free chlorine to improve and maintain the highest water quality standards. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) endorse and support this procedure.

### How long will the free chlorine conversion last?

The duration of the free chlorine conversion will be just under 30 days.

### Why all the flushing?

The District will flush hydrants to help maintain clear water for our customers and to ensure the free chlorine has made it to the far reaches of our distribution system. We will repeat the process when we convert back to chloramine.

### Can hydrant flushing in my area cause cloudiness or sediment in my water?

The flushing process can stir up sediments and minerals in water mains that may make it into customer service lines, resulting in some short-term cloudiness or discoloration. If you encounter this condition, flush faucets, tubs, and toilets until the water clears. You may choose not to wash clothing during the flushing periods, due to the possibility of discolored water, to reduce the chance of staining. Prior to washing clothing, customers may want to run a little water in a bathtub to check for discoloration.