



CITY OF OVIEDO FLORIDA

400 ALEXANDRIA BLVD • OVIEDO, FLORIDA 32765

407-971-5555 • WWW.CITYOFOVIEDO.NET

Annual Conversion to Free Chlorine & Fire Hydrant Flushing Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is chloramine? Chloramine is a Federal and State approved disinfectant used in drinking water to remove bacteria and viruses. Chloramines are a better long-term disinfectant option because they remain in the water distribution system longer and produce lower levels of disinfection by-products. Chloramine is made up of ammonia and chlorine.

2. What is free chlorine? Free chlorine is a more aggressive disinfectant than chloramine, making it ideal for eliminating more resistant bacteria and viruses.

3. Is switching disinfects from chloramines to free chlorine safe? The City uses the EPA's best management practices to maintain the health of the water delivered to each home. The EPA rules and regulation limit the amount of chemical compounds known as Disinfection By-products (DBPs) within the water. The use of chloramines, as opposed to free chlorine, hinders the formation of DBPs while disinfecting the water. An additional benefit includes less of a chlorine taste and odor in the water with the use of chloramines.

4. What is the purpose of converting from chloramines to free chlorine? Temporarily converting from chloramines to free chlorine is done to accompany the flushing process. Over time 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 the 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 EPA's standard practice and is used nationwide.

5. How long will free chlorine be used in the water system? Typically free chlorine is used for one to two months once or twice a year as needed to maintain optimum water distribution system. The City notifies residents of the chlorine flush each time prior to the event by mail and posting on the City's website.

6. 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 their own sensitivity level to the taste and/or odor of free chlorine. The utility does not add additional chlorine, the utility simply turns off the ammonia used to create the chloramine disinfectant.

7. Is water treated with free chlorine and/or chloramines safe? Yes, both are safe and effective. FDEP is in regular communication with the Florida Department of Health (FDH) and strictly adheres to the FDH guidelines on minimum and maximum chlorine levels allowable. Both forms of chlorinated water are safe for people and animals to drink, cooking and bathing, watering the garden, and all other common uses. However, precautions must be taken to remove or neutralize chloramines and or free chlorine during the kidney dialysis process, in the preparation of water for fish tanks and ponds, and for businesses requiring highly processed water.



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8. Will chloramine or free chlorine 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/chlorine-resistant parts, which are readily available at hardware supply stores or from your plumber, when replacing rubber plumbing materials. Chloramine-resistant parts will be effective regardless of the type of chlorine used.

9. Why are free chlorine and chloramine harmful for dialysis patients? Both free chlorine and chloramine may harm kidney dialysis patients during the dialysis process if it is not removed from water before passing into the bloodstream. The FDH can inspect and certify that dialysis facilities in the service area are prepared prior to the conversions to free chlorine and chloramines. Like everyone else, dialysis patients may drink water treated with either free chlorine or chloramines because the digestive process neutralizes these chemicals before they can enter the bloodstream.

10. How can I remove chlorine from my water? Chlorine can be removed by boiling water for 15 minutes, adding a bit of lemon juice, or filling a container with water and leaving it to vent. Some water treatment devices such as carbon filters and water softeners reduce chlorine levels too.

11. Will pool owners need to treat water differently? No, pool owners will not treat water differently. Owners can continue to maintain the chlorine level in the pool water to prevent algae and bacterial growth. Pool supply stores can provide pool owners with more information.

12. What does “hydrant flushing” mean? The utility water distribution crews will flush the chlorinated water through fire hydrants. The flushing allows sediments and minerals that been collected in the water mains to be washed out. Additionally, the flushing process is part of the City of Oviedo’s annual hydrant exercising program to maintain hydrants for firefighting use.

Note: Hydrant flushing usually takes place concurrent with the free chlorine, but hydrant flushing may occur year round. No public notice is required to flush hydrants to keep the water distribution system in optimum condition for water delivery.

13. Will I see a drop in water pressure due to the flushing? Most customers will not see a drop in water pressure because the majority of the water system is looped. If a change in pressure does occur, it usually lasts for 30 minutes or less.

14. Will there be any additional cost to my water bill during the flush? There is no additional cost to your water bill.

15. Will hydrant flushing in my area cause cloudiness or sediment in my water? The flushing process can stir up sediments and minerals in water mains, occasionally resulting in some short-term cloudy water conditions. If you encounter such conditions, please flush the water from tap until the cloudiness dissipates. If you experience this condition for an extended period of time, please contact the City of Oviedo, Water Distribution Supervisor, David Pardo at 407-971-5695.

16. Where can I get more information? For more information, please contact the City of Oviedo Water and Wastewater Superintendent, Stephen Medeiros office at 407-971-5684.