



LANCASTER COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT / UNION COUNTY / ANSON COUNTY

Chlorine Burnout Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) February, 2019

What are we doing?

In a continuing effort to provide high-quality, great-tasting water, Union County, Anson County, Monroe and the Lancaster County Water & Sewer District will conduct a routine Water Quality Preventative Maintenance Program. This program will involve temporarily switching water disinfectants from the present chloramines to chlorine within the distribution systems. The reason this effort is being done jointly is because the systems are all interconnected and they all use chloramines as a primary disinfectant.

Why are we temporarily switching from chloramines to free chlorine?

Chloramine is a very stable and long-lasting disinfectant in water systems. As a maintenance activity to optimize the water quality of the distribution system, the water plant will switch to free chlorine for disinfection for a period of about one month, or until the distribution system has been completely flushed for the following reasons:

- Remove any biofilm and bacteria from the water distribution system pipes;
- Reduce the formation of nitrates and nitrites (nitrification);
- Reduce any taste and odor complaints;
- This maintenance process is recommended by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC), and North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR).

After distribution system flushing is completed, the water plant will resume disinfection utilizing chloramines.

How long will the burnout take to complete?

The planned dates are Monday, February 25, 2019 through Sunday, March 31, 2019

During this maintenance process, is the water safe to drink and use?

Yes. The water being produced and distributed to customers during this period will continue to meet Federal and State water quality standards and is completely safe for consumption and use.

Critical users such as hospitals, dialysis groups, pet/aquatic/pond companies, companies that use water for processing, and other water users sensitive to chloramines or free chlorine should consult with their professionals about their internal treatment procedures.

What effects may customers observe during this maintenance/flushing process?

Customer may see some of the following during this maintenance process:

- A slight discoloration or cloudiness in the water;
- A slight chlorine odor or taste;
- Minor fluctuations in water pressures while flushing is occurring;
- Minor discoloration in the water due to flushing the system;
- Utility crews operating fire hydrants to flush the system.

Many customers may not notice any change in the water.

What should customers do if they experience any discoloration or odor?

If the water is discolored or cloudy, flush the water through an outside spigot or tub faucet for a few minutes to clear. By running the water through a spigot or tub faucet, the problem clears faster. It will not clog faucet strainers.

Why not stay with free chlorine as a treatment process?

While chlorine is a stronger disinfectant, it reacts with organic matter found naturally in our raw water supply and produces disinfectant byproducts such as trihalomethanes (THMs) and haloacetic acids (HAAs). Free chlorine also does not last as long in the distribution system. Chloramine is a better long-term treatment because it produces lower levels of disinfectant bi-products, has improved odor and taste characteristics, lasts longer and has better stability in the water distribution system.

Why is this maintenance activity and flushing being performed now?

- It is ideal that this maintenance activity be performed in the spring or fall of the year, when usage is low.
- Performing a major flushing operation in the summer months creates a production issue for the water plant and lowers system pressures.
- Flushing water mains in the winter months creates other problems, such as freezing roads and sidewalks.