



CITY OF DURHAM
Department of Water Management
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News Release

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City of Durham to Perform Temporary Water Disinfection Changeover

Federal and State-Mandated Annual Month-Long Process Begins February 28

DURHAM, N.C. — Durham water customers may notice a slight change in the taste and smell of their tap water through the month of March as the City's Department of Water Management performs its annual water treatment disinfection changeover process. This involves temporarily switching from the chlorine and ammonia combination ordinarily used to disinfect Durham's water to chlorine only. The process lasts approximately six weeks. City water treatment staff will stop adding ammonia on February 28 and resume its use on April 13. Required by federal and state regulations, the changeover is performed each year during the spring and will not affect the safety or quality of Durham's drinking water.

Durham has used chlorine and ammonia as its primary disinfection method since 2002. Together, the chemicals form a compound called chloramine, which safely and effectively disinfects water while also reducing the formation of disinfection byproducts in the water distribution system. This once a year, temporary switch to chlorine only is a precautionary measure to ensure the entire water distribution system remains clean. To disperse the chlorine throughout the system, the City's Water & Sewer Maintenance Division (WSM) will systematically start flushing hydrants across Durham on Monday, March 2. Flushing also will last approximately six weeks.

While WSM crews are in their neighborhoods, residents may notice a slight discoloration in their water. Dialysis patients and aquarium/pond owners should continue to take special precautions to remove traces of ammonia and chlorine from water prior to using it. Before washing white

clothing, customers should check their water and, if noticing any discoloration, turn on the tap until the water runs clear. If discoloration persists, contact WSM at (919) 560-4344. If a stronger than normal taste or odor is present in drinking water, try storing some in the refrigerator for later use. The chlorine dissipates after a few hours.

During this changeover, several of Durham's interconnected neighboring utilities in the Triangle – including Raleigh, Cary, Apex, Morrisville, and Orange Water and Sewer Authority – also will conduct their annual disinfection process and flushing. Coordinating the timing is helpful, as it allows providers to continue sharing and receiving supplemental water from neighboring communities if needed.

For more information about chloramination and the water disinfection process, contact Water Management at (919) 560-4381 or visit <http://durhamnc.gov/1196/>.

About the Department of Water Management

The Department of Water Management is responsible for the operation and maintenance of Durham's water supply, water treatment and water reclamation (wastewater treatment) facilities, the collection and distribution systems (including meter reading), and customer billing services. The department has a wide variety of support divisions and programs to maintain the existing infrastructure that provide these integral services, and strives to be a responsible steward of the City's physical assets. For information, visit <http://durhamnc.gov/944/>, like [Durham Saves Water](#) on Facebook, and follow [@DurhamWater](#) on Twitter.

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