



# News Release

For Immediate Release: February 12, 2021

## **City of Durham to Perform Temporary Water Disinfection Changeover**

*Federal and State-Mandated Annual Month-Long Process Begins February 26;*

*Will Not Impact Safety or Quality of Drinking Water*

DURHAM, N.C. — Durham water customers may notice a slight change in the taste and smell of their tap water beginning February 26 and continuing through April 12 as the City of Durham's Water Management Department performs its annual water treatment disinfection changeover process.

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. This annual process involves temporarily switching from the chlorine and ammonia combination ordinarily used to disinfect Durham's water to chlorine only. City water treatment staff will stop adding ammonia on February 26 and resume its use on April 12. The 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 department's Water & Sewer Maintenance Division will systematically start flushing hydrants across the city beginning on Monday, March 1. The disinfection process and systematic flushing will last approximately six weeks.

### **What to Look for in Neighborhoods**

While Water Management crews are in their neighborhoods, residents may notice a slight discoloration in their tap 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 the department 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.

### **Background**

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.

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 the department at (919) 560-4381 or visit their [water treatment process webpage](#).

## About the City of Durham Water Management Department

The [Water Management Department](#) is responsible for the operation and maintenance of Durham's water supply, water treatment and water reclamation (wastewater treatment) facilities, 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 the department's [webpage](#) and follow @DurhamWater on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

###

101 City Hall Plaza, Second Floor, Durham, NC 27701

919.560.4123

[DurhamNC.gov](#)

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC

