



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 24

DURHAM, N.C. — Starting later this week, Durham water customers may notice a slight change in the taste and smell of their tap water through the month of March. The City's Department of Water Management is performing its annual water treatment disinfection changeover process, which begins Friday, February 24 and takes about four weeks to complete. This process is required by federal and state regulations, and is performed each year during the spring. It will not affect the safety or quality of Durham's drinking water.

The changeover process involves temporarily stopping the use of ammonia during water treatment. When used together, ammonia and chlorine form a chemical called chloramine, which safely and effectively disinfects water while also reducing the formation of disinfection byproducts in the water distribution system. Durham has been using chloramination as its primary disinfection process since 2002. Federal and state regulators require water providers that rely on chloramination to temporarily change this method of disinfection once a year. The temporary switch to chlorine-only disinfection serves as a precautionary measure to ensure the entire water distribution system is clean. City water treatment staff will halt ammonia addition on February 24, and will resume adding it on April 1.

Additionally, on Monday, February 27, the department's Water & Sewer Maintenance Division (WSM) will start flushing the City's entire water system to help disperse chlorine throughout the system. Ten two-man crews will work throughout Durham flushing hydrants between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday, for approximately three weeks.

During this process, residents may notice slight discoloration in their water while WSM crews are working in their neighborhoods. Dialysis patients and aquarium/pond owners should

continue to take special precautions to remove traces of ammonia and chlorine from the water prior to using it. Customers should also check their water before washing white clothing. If water discoloration occurs, run the water for a few minutes until it becomes clear. If discoloration persists, contact WSM at (919) 560-4344. Customers can also store drinking water in the refrigerator for use later, as the chlorine taste and odor dissipates after sitting for a few hours.

Also during this time, several of Durham's interconnected neighboring utilities in the Triangle – including Raleigh, Cary, Apex, Morrisville, and Orange Water and Sewer Authority – will conduct their annual disinfection process changeover and water distribution system flushing. This is a common and deliberate practice, and is helpful if one provider needs to share or receive supplemental water with a neighboring community.

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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