



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EWSU to Switch Water Disinfectant Starting May 22 Until July 10

(EVANSVILLE, IN) - Starting Monday, May 22, some Evansville Water and Sewer Utility (EWSU) customers may notice a slight change in the taste and odor of their tap water. The change is related to a temporary switch in the disinfectant that is used in the water treatment process to ensure the delivery of high-quality, safe drinking water to EWSU customers.

The switch to free chlorine from the regularly used disinfectant chloramine will begin on Monday, May 22, and continue until Monday, July 10. EWSU switches disinfectants twice a year. The second switchover will be from August 28 until October 16. Many water utilities use this common preventive maintenance practice to keep water mains clean and free of potentially harmful bacteria throughout the year.

Here's what you should know

- **What is Chloramine?**

Chloramine is a disinfectant used in drinking water to remove bacteria and viruses that can make you sick. It is made up of chlorine and ammonia. EWSU has used chloramine as the disinfectant in its water treatment process since 1999.

- **What is Free Chlorine?**

Free chlorine is a slightly more potent disinfectant than chloramine, and it is used to remove more resistant bacteria and viruses that may be found in the water distribution system.

- **Why would EWSU Convert from Chloramines to Free Chlorine?**

State drinking water guidelines recommend that utilities using chloramine periodically switch to free chlorine for a while. The temporary use of chlorine will ensure that a proper disinfectant level is maintained throughout the network of water mains and pipes that deliver your drinking water.

Free chlorine is a more aggressive disinfectant than chloramine. This temporary change in the water treatment process denies bacteria the ability to form resistance to the usual disinfection treatment process. Switching to free chlorine is a proactive step to maintain optimal disinfectant levels in the water distribution system.



As always, the drinking water will be regularly monitored to ensure that the water delivered meets or exceeds federal Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

• **Why Does EWSU Use Chloramines Most of the Year?**

While chlorine is an effective disinfectant, chlorine alone creates byproducts that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulates. These byproduct levels can be significantly and cost-effectively reduced through the use of chloramine. Also, chloramine has less smell than chlorine and remains in the distribution system longer to prevent bacterial growth. As such, chloramine is a better long-term choice as a regular disinfectant.

• **Will I Notice a Difference in My Water?**

During this period, some customers may notice a slight change in the taste or odor of their tap water. Free chlorine may have more of a chemical odor, slightly like that of swimming pool water. Each customer has their sensitivity level to the taste or odor of free chlorine. Many detect no change at all. The mild chlorine taste and odor are typical and pose no health risk.

• **Are Free Chlorine and Chloraminated Water Safe?**

Yes, chlorine and chloramine are effective and safe for people and animals for drinking, cooking, bathing, watering the garden, and all other standard uses. However, precautions should be taken to remove or neutralize chloramine and free chlorine during the kidney dialysis process, when preparing water for fish tanks and ponds, and businesses requiring highly processed water. A dichlorination procedure optimized for chloramine removal will work equally well with free chlorine.

People and businesses that typically take special precautions to remove chloramine from tap water (such as dialysis centers, medical facilities, and aquatic pet owners) should continue to take the same precautions during the temporary switch from chloramine to free chlorine.

Most customers will not need to take precautions as the water remains safe to drink and is treated according to state and federal standards.

• **Information for Kidney Dialysis Patients**

Just like chloramines, free chlorine must be removed from water used in kidney dialysis machines. EWSU has contacted representatives from the medical community to inform them of this temporary conversion. We advise dialysis patients to call their physicians or dialysis centers if there are any questions.

• **Information for Fish Owners**

Like chloramine, free chlorine is toxic to fish. Therefore, fish owners need to remove chlorine, ammonia, and chloramine from the water before using it with tropical fish. Local pet stores carry water conditioners that remove chloramine and free chlorine. If



customers have questions, we recommend contacting their pet store for information and detailed instructions.

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About EWSU

Evansville Water and Sewer Utility (EWSU) provides high-quality, safe and dependable water and sewer services to more than 63,000 customers in Vanderburgh County and parts of Gibson, Posey and Warrick counties. EWSU maintains more than 1,000 miles of water lines, 800 miles of sewer lines, 6,100 hydrants, eight water storage facilities, two wastewater treatment plants and one water filtration plant. The utility also manages the City's street sweeping and trash and recycling contracts. EWSU meets or exceeds all state and federal Safe Drinking Water Act standards while protecting land and water resources for future generations.