

News Release

October 21, 2025



Water System Maintenance

Starting on Tuesday, October 21st the City of Atchison will switch the way it disinfects the water for approximately two weeks. While this is a normal maintenance process, this particular occurrence comes at the request of the Kansas Department of Health & Environment to better enable the rural water districts in Atchison County that are under a Boil Water Advisory to restore the appropriate chlorine residual levels. Water for City of Atchison customers will be safe to drink throughout this process.

For most of the year, Atchison uses chloramines for the disinfection of the drinking water. Chloramines are created by combining chlorine and ammonia. During this maintenance procedure, sometimes referred to as a free chlorine burn or "burn out", the disinfection process will be changed from chloramines to free chlorine.

Free chlorine is a stronger and faster-acting disinfectant. While this was not a scheduled or otherwise necessary maintenance activity at this time (other than to assist with the rural water supplies), the City will take this opportunity to perform other beneficial maintenance processes that are typically associated with the free chlorine burn process. As such, customers may notice open fire hydrants throughout the city during this period and/or overflowing water storage towers. The fire hydrants will be opened to allow flushing of the system to help remove sediment from the pipes and distribute the change in disinfectant. Overflowing water storage towers further aid in the flushing process and help reduce nitrification.

It is important to understand that during this temporary change, there may be some discoloration or cloudiness in the water and possibly a slight chlorine odor or taste. If this is experienced, you may want to run the water through the tap until it clears. Minor pressure fluctuations and small air pockets may also occur. Fire hydrant flushing should remove a majority of the color and odor, but some may reach customer lines during the process.

The water is safe to drink throughout this process. Any odor and color issues will be nuisance only, which will subside as the flushing is completed. Customers who use tap water for kidney dialysis at home should consult their doctor to advise them if any changes are necessary in their residual disinfectant neutralization procedures. Customers utilizing the water for aquariums should monitor both free and combined chlorine residuals.

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