Water System Maintenance Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the "Water System Maintenance Program?"
This program is a temporary conversion from chloramine to chlorine disinfection and is a routine maintenance measure designed to reduce the potential for occurrences of coliform or other types of bacteria in the water delivery system.

Why is the maintenance program being conducted?
This is a planned treatment designed to provide protection to our customers against potentially harmful bacteria in the water supply. Many utilities using chloramine disinfection find it helpful to switch periodically to a free chlorine treatment program to maintain water quality. Based on water quality monitoring and sampling data, Pinellas County will perform the water system maintenance program once or twice a year.

What other benefits does the maintenance program provide?
This method of water quality maintenance is an effective alternative to flushing millions of gallons of drinking water. As a result of enhanced water quality monitoring and flushing strategies, flushing volumes continue to be reduced.

Who will be affected?
The program will include all water customers of Pinellas County as well as customers in the cities of Clearwater, Pinellas Park and Safety Harbor.

Will customers notice any changes in the water during the program?
Pinellas County water customers may experience a slight difference in the taste and/or smell of the water during this temporary change in treatment. These are normal occurrences and carry no negative health effects for the general population. The impact to the customer will be similar to that experienced when a water main is replaced or other routine maintenance is performed on the water distribution system.

Can I drink the water during this maintenance program?
Yes. The water will continue to meet federal and state standards for safe drinking water during this period. Health concerns associated with disinfection byproducts—total trihalomethanes (TTHMs) and haloacetic acids five (HAA5s) are related to long-term exposure and not short-term maintenance actions. Additional information can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, by visiting www.cdc.gov and the World Health Organization website, by visiting www.who.int.

Do I need to boil the water?
No, boiling the water is not necessary.

Will the program affect dialysis patients?
Users of kidney dialysis machines should not be impacted, but should contact their dialysis care provider for more information about water testing and precautions regarding chlorine removal. Chlorine, like chloramine, is fatal if it enters the bloodstream during the hemodialysis process.

As a result, strict water purification standards are already followed by the kidney dialysis industry as established by the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation.

Will the chlorine affect aquatic life?
The temporary change to chlorine should not affect fish owners if a system is already in place to remove chloramine. Those with questions should contact their local pet suppliers.

Why do we flush the water distribution system?
Having a written flushing plan is a regulatory requirement, however, Pinellas County Utilities has always employed flushing as one of the methods for keeping water quality at its best. Flushing the water mains improves water quality by removing sediment in the pipes and by eliminating stagnant water found in dead-end pipes in various locations throughout the system.

What if I have a water softener or any other type of water treatment device?
Residents with any type of water treatment devices should follow the manufacturer's specifications.

When will the program be conducted?
The maintenance program for 2018 will take place from **May 14 through June 8, 2018 and October 1 through October 26, 2018.** If there are any changes in the duration, customers will be notified through a news release and on www.pinellascounty.org/utilities.

If I have questions, how can I find more information?
For more information, please visit www.pinellascounty.org/utilities or contact Pinellas County Utilities Customer Service at (727) 464-4000 or your water service provider.