

PRESS RELEASE

September 3, 2012

Serrano Water District Announces Changes in Drinking Water Treatment

Villa Park, California – September 3, 2012 – The Serrano Water District has announced major upgrades and modernization of its water treatment facility. In early December, ozone will be added to the process at the treatment plant, and chloramine will replace chlorine as the disinfectant in the water served to the District's customers in Villa Park and portions of the City of Orange.

Chlorine has been the disinfectant of choice in the District's tap water for decades. However, chlorine formed trace levels of chemical by-products that are regulated by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Public Health. The allowable limits of these by-products have recently been lowered. The District evaluated different alternatives to lowering the formation of these by-products to meet the new limits, and determined that the preferred alternative is to add ozone at the treatment plant and convert the disinfectant in the water delivered to customers from chlorine to chloramine. Neither ozone nor chloramine forms the regulated by-products formed by chlorine. With this change, the District's customers will join most of southern California's population in drinking water treated with ozone and chloramine disinfection.

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has been serving water containing chloramine to more than 15 million people in Southern California since the 1980's. These include the cities of Orange, Santa Ana, Irvine, Fullerton and many others. Metropolitan is also currently adding ozone to its five water treatment plants located in Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside Counties.

Ozone is a strong disinfectant that kills a wide range of microbes that could be present in water. Ozone also destroys any objectionable taste and odor that could occasionally be present in the District's water supply. Chloramine is a disinfectant that is formed by combining chlorine and ammonia.

Impact on Dialysis Patients & Owners of Aquatic Animals

The vast majority of people will not need to make any changes in response to the switch from chlorine to chloramine in their tap water. However, two types of customers will be impacted by this change: Dialysis patients and owners of aquatic animals. Dialysis machines use water, and must remove all chlorine, chloramine, and any other impurities from water before it contacts the bloodstream. For this reason, these machines contain an elaborate filtration system. It is important that dialysis patients check with their dialysis service provider to ensure that the machines they are using contain the proper filtration system capable of removing chloramine from water. The filter used to remove chloramine may be different from the filter used for removing chlorine. Water containing chloramine will also contain low levels of ammonia. The filtration system should also be selected to remove ammonia from the water.

Chloramine, like chlorine, can kill fish and aquatic animals, and ammonia is harmful to some aquatic species. That is because the bloodstream of fish and amphibians comes in direct contact with the water. Fish and amphibians get their oxygen directly from water through their gills. Products used to remove chloramine and ammonia are available from pet stores and internet suppliers. It is important that customers with aquariums and ponds contact their local pet store and inquire about products or filters to remove chloramine and ammonia from the water before they put it in the aquariums and ponds.

About Serrano Water District

The Serrano Water District is a public water agency that serves about 6,000 residents in Villa Park and parts of the City of Orange. Questions about this change in treatment should be directed to the District at (714) 538-0079.