

chloramination explained

Even after water leaves our treatment works Scottish Water must ensure that the water which reaches your home is of a high quality to meet the Water Supply (Water Quality)(Scotland) Regulations 2001. The most common treatment processes for us to do this are to use chlorine or chlorine combined with ammonia (chloramination).

For more information on why we add chlorine to your water, please see Scottish Water **Factsheet 5 chlorine explained**.

This factsheet provides you with information on:

- why chlorine is a safe way to disinfect water
- where we sample
- what chloramination is and why it is used
- the difference you will notice if the treatment process for your water supply is changed to chloramination
- special information for owners of pet fish and other aquatic species
- special information for kidney dialysis patients
- how to contact us

why chlorine is a safe way to disinfect water

For around a century, chlorine has been the most reliable way of treating water. It is harmless to humans at the concentrations we use in our water supplies.

Chlorine continues to keep water safe after it leaves our treatment works and travels along the network of pipes on its way to your homes and businesses. This helps to ensure that you receive high quality water. Scottish Water is required to meet strict microbiological standards as laid down in the Water Supply (Water Quality) (Scotland) Regulations 2001.

where we sample

Water is sampled regularly at our treatment works, service reservoirs and at our customers' taps to monitor the quality of the drinking water. In addition to this, some water quality parameters are continuously monitored at major treatment works. Across Scotland over 350,000 laboratory tests are carried out on water samples each year for regulatory purposes. Many more samples are taken by staff for operational reasons (e.g. bursts, new mains, complaints). The percentage of all regulatory samples complying with the relevant standards in Scotland is over 99%.

what chloramination is and why it is used

Chloramination is based on the formation of chloramines, formed when chlorine combines with very small quantities of ammonia at our treatment works. This treatment process lasts longer within the pipe distribution system than using chlorine on its own so there is no need to add additional chlorine along the network of pipes. Plus, unlike chlorine, chloramines have the benefit of having no significant taste or odour.

Chloramination is widely practiced in other parts of the UK to treat public water supplies. As part of our long term investment programme to improve water quality for our customers, Scottish Water are gradually increasing the number of areas in Scotland being supplied with chloraminated water.

the difference you will notice if the treatment process for your water supply is changed to chloramination

If you have been sensitive to the taste or smell of chlorine in your tap water, this should be reduced or even disappear when we change to the chloramination treatment process. Otherwise you should notice no change.

special information for owners of pet fish and other aquatic species

Chloramines can be harmful to fresh and salt water fish and other aquatic reptiles and amphibians, but can be neutralised by simply adding water conditioning agents. These are available from your specialist aquarium or pet shop.

Biological filters can be effective in reducing the small amount of ammonia present. Please contact your local aquarium or pet shop or specialist society for any advice.

Chloramination is harmless to other domestic pets and should have no effect on plants or soil.

If you are in any doubt your aquatic pet shop, local vet or specialist society should be able to give you advice on pets affected by this treatment process and suitable equipment.

special information for kidney dialysis patients

Chloramines are only harmful when they directly enter the bloodstream. Please ensure all equipment used in renal care plans is safe and modified accordingly. The relevant Health Authorities have been informed. For medical advice please consult your Doctor or local NHS Board for advice.

additional information

If you want to know if your water is chloraminated or would like further details about chloramination please contact our **Customer Helpline** on **0845 601 8855** and ask for a copy of one of our leaflets:

- **Chloramination: Information for people who live in an area where chloramination treatment process is used** – quoting reference SWChlora1.
- **Chloramination: Information for owners of pet fish and other aquatic species** – quoting reference SWChlora2.
- **Chloramination: Information for kidney dialysis patients** – quoting reference SWChlora3.

how to contact us

Details of water quality testing in your area can be obtained by contacting us and asking to speak to one of our specialists in the Public Health team.

If you require more information on our services, please contact us:

By phone on our **Customer Helpline 0845 601 8855**

On the web at **www.scottishwater.co.uk**

Or in writing at **Scottish Water, PO Box 8855, Edinburgh, EH10 6YQ**

Alternative formats of this leaflet can be made available free of charge. Textphone users please call **0845 603 8855**. For information on Braille, large print, audio tapes and a variety of languages, please call **0845 606 8855**.

Please quote this reference code when contacting us: **SWFact CLME2 08/08**

We record all calls for quality and training purposes.