

CHLORINATION, TASTE AND ODOURS

Riverina Water County Council supplies high quality water to its customers

One of the ways we ensure this high quality is to chlorinate the water.



Liquid Chlorine

Why Chlorinate ?

Chlorine is added to drinking water to kill bacteria known as E. coli. Non-chlorinated water can result in infections from mild diarrhoea to severe gastroenteritis. The largest outbreak of infection to date was in May 2000 at Walkerton, Canada. Cattle faeces contamination entered a well after a storm. 2,500 people were reported sick and 7 people died.

Chlorine levels are monitored daily by Riverina Water County Council and also by NSW Health. Chlorine can be dosed in two forms – gas or liquid. Both are equally effective and can be tested for reserves, unlike UV or Ozone.

Small amounts of chlorine are added to the water supply to kill any bacteria and viruses present in our water sources such as rivers and bores that have escaped previous treatment. The chlorine in the water also provides ongoing protection against the introduction of bacteria and viruses.

You should not normally be able to smell or taste the chlorine in the water.

Do you notice a chlorine taste or odour?

A chlorine odour in the water does not usually mean there is a high level of chlorine in the water. "Chlorine" odours are generally caused by the small amount of chlorine in the water, reacting with household plumbing fixtures such as hoses, tap washers, tap strainer/aerators.

As well as producing odours, chlorine can produce tastes when it reacts with some plumbing fixtures.

Some Common Causes:

Some of the things you can check if you are experiencing water taste problems are:

- **Tap washers** – some produce tastes – try other taps in your house or your front garden tap, preferably the tap closest to the meter. Eliminate taps until a definite area can be determined.
- **Aerators on kitchen taps** – often collect material that can cause taste complaints when combined with chlorine. These strainers may require cleaning to remove such build up. Caution must be taken when disassembling the aerator to ensure washers are replaced in the correct order.
- **Hoses on newly installed dishwashers and washing machines** – can cause tastes in nearby taps. You can clarify this by checking water coming from taps in other parts of the house, eg bathroom taps or better still, the meter tap. Try turning taps connecting dishwashers and washing machines off when not in use and see if the problem persists.
- **Some garden hoses** – particularly soaker hoses, can produce strong chlorine odours. This is often caused by the small amounts of chlorine present in the water reacting with the plastics and chemicals used in the manufacture of the hoses. This will not normally produce taste and odours in the water coming from other taps within the house.
- **Water sitting in plumbing overnight** – It is a good idea to let water run for a while before using for drinks. If you store water in the refrigerator, you can avoid the need to use water straight from the tap first thing of a morning.

What about Council's Water Mains ?

Taste and odour complaints do not always arise from problems within a house and sometimes can be rectified by our staff flushing mains near your house.

Consult with neighbours and if the problem does not appear to be isolated to your house. Contact our Water Quality Officer on (02) 6922 0670 or 0402 418525 so we can check for other possible causes.