



## UNION COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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### News Release

#### Water from Catawba to be Treated with Chloramines

**July 20, 2009, Monroe, NC** – As early as September, drinking water supplied from the Catawba River Water Treatment Plant to Union County's Western Water Distribution System serving the northern and western areas of the county will be disinfected with chloramines instead of chlorine. The change will result in better water quality for Union County Public Works' customers by lowering the concentration of disinfection byproducts in the system.

Disinfection is a step in the water treatment process to assure the biological safety of water. Chlorine, chloramines and other chemicals can be used as disinfectants. Historically, chlorine has been the only disinfectant used in Union County. With this conversion, all customers that receive water at both the Catawba River Water Treatment Plant and the Anson County Water Treatment Plant at Blewitt Falls will receive water that has been disinfected with chloramines. Water from Anson County began being treated with chloramines in August 2008.

Chloramine is formed when ammonia is added to water that contains free chlorine. Depending upon the pH and the amount of ammonia, ammonia reacts to form one of three chloramine compounds.  $\text{NH}_2\text{Cl}$ , monochloramine, is the preferred compound and is the one the Catawba plant will produce.

The EPA accepts chloramine as a disinfectant and recognizes its ability to control disinfection byproduct formation. The addition of chloramine to the disinfection process quenches the production of disinfection byproducts. The water leaving the treatment plant and entering the distribution systems will have had the bacteria killed or inactivated, but the reaction that produces disinfection byproducts will have been stopped and the level of those chemicals in the water delivered to the customers will be substantially reduced.

Chloraminated water is safe for bathing, drinking, cooking and all everyday uses. For the majority of the consumers there will be no negative effects as a result of the change. However, there are two groups of people who need to take special care with chloraminated water: kidney dialysis patients and fish owners.

For patients receiving dialysis treatment, the chloramines disinfectant must be completely removed from the water before it is used. The pretreatment for these dialysis machines must include some means of removing the chloramines, such as charcoal filtration. Dialysis patients should check with their physician to be certain the required changes are made.

Fish hobby stores and hobbyist, who keep, raise or breed tropical fish and other aquatic life should be aware that the use of chloramines could be toxic to their fish and should make sure

their water filtration and purification systems are designed for use with water that has been treated with chloramines.

All customers served by the county's Western Water Distribution System have been sent notification of this change to the water disinfection process.

Customers with questions about chloramines should call 704-296-4210.

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