SWA FAQs: Chlorine and Chloramines

Why does SWA use Chloramines instead of Chlorine to treat the water?
According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Chloramine provides better protection against bacterial regrowth in water systems. The EPA states that chloramine, like chlorine, effectively controls Biofilm, a slime formed by bacterial growth that coats and corrodes pipes and can harbor dangerous concentrations of coliform bacteria. Chloramine, however, tends not to react with organic compounds in water, consumers may have fewer complaints about the chemical taste and odor of treated water.

What is Chloramine?
Chloramine is a chemical compound made by reacting ammonia with the active ingredient in chlorine bleach. Although it is a weaker germicide than chlorine, it is more stable, which is why most water systems are using Chloramine.

Does the level of Chloramine or Chlorine used in treating water pose any health concerns?
The EPA states that neither poses health concerns to humans at the levels used for drinking water disinfection, but even at those levels, both can harm fish and amphibians. It's important to know that should you have any medical concerns you should contact your health provider.

Are there any health concerns with Chloramine or Chlorine in water?
While the levels of either one is usually low to be a health concern, either one may cause issues for a person on kidney dialysis. Questions about kidney dialysis or other health issues should be directed to your physician or medical center.

Can I use a filter to remove the Chloramine from my water?
A special type of granular active carbon filter, which is designed specifically for Chloramine removal, can remove chloramines.

Are Chlorine or Chloramines toxic to animals or fish?
The small amount of Chloramines added to the water will not affect animals such as mammals and birds and can be used regularly for watering and bathing animals. Both are harmful to fish. Unlike Chlorine, however, Chloramines cannot be removed by allowing the water to stand a few days. Products, including drops, used to remove Chloramines are available at aquarium supply stores. An activated carbon filter designed for use with chloramines is effective. If you have questions concerning the care of your fish and pets, contact your pet store or veterinarian.

How good is Southwest Water Authority's (SWA's) water quality?
Because they use reverse-osmosis and ultra-filtration purification to treat the drinking water at the OMND Water Treatment Plant and must meet higher safety drinking water standards than bottled waters, it is excellent water and in fact placed fourth in the world for it great taste and clarity.

What is the difference in bottled water and tap water regulations?
Public drinking water is regulated by North Dakota's Department of Health. Each year, as required by Federal Law, every public water system like SWA, must perform an annual water quality test report that is called a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), which is distributed to everyone connected to the public water system annually. Because the FDA regulates bottled water as a food, it cannot require certified lab testing or violation reporting. Furthermore, FDA does not require bottled water companies to disclose to consumers where the water came from, how it has been treated, or what contaminants it contains.