

Safety of our Drinking Water



In light of recent national news about lead in drinking water, we want you to know that our drinking water continues to meet all drinking water standards and is safe to drink.

How does lead get into drinking water?

Lead is not typically found in sources of drinking water supplies such as lakes. However, lead can enter drinking water from corrosion of lead solder in plumbing systems installed before 1986, or corrosion of lead in other materials. (The safety standards for solder changed in 1986.)

What does OWASA do to minimize corrosion and the release of lead?

- We have an effective corrosion control program which includes properly managing the drinking water chemistry and adding a phosphate compound. The phosphate forms a protective coating inside pipes and fixtures to control corrosion in our public water system and in private plumbing.
- In the 1990s, we removed all known lead pipes from our water system. There were some small lead pipes used to connect our large water mains to meters.

What does OWASA do to check for lead in drinking water?

- In accord with Federal and State requirements, we test for lead in drinking water in 30 homes with pre-1986 plumbing systems every three years. In the past four rounds of monitoring, we have had only one sample with a measurable level of lead and the result was below the regulatory limit.
- We test drinking water for lead when requested by a customer, and at no charge.

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Please comment on Proposed Advance Metering Infrastructure System (AMI)

On March 24, 2016 the OWASA Board of Directors may decide whether to invest in an AMI system and the Board welcomes your thoughts and opinions prior to making this important decision.

A brief summary of what is being considering and how this project could impact you is provided below. Additional information about AMI is available on our website, www.owasa.org.

What is AMI?

An AMI system collects meter readings remotely via radio transmissions, eliminating the need to drive or walk through the community to collect this information monthly as we do now. As a result of their efficiency, AMI systems can read meters more often (many times a day vs. once a month). AMI systems also eliminate the potential for human error when reading meters.

Key Benefits to Customers

- OWASA staff will have access to information that empowers them to proactively let customers know when their water-use patterns indicate a potential leak at the customer's premises.
- Customers will have access to their water use data online, providing much greater insight into how water is used. This will help our customers conserve water and save money.
- An AMI system will significantly reduce our vehicle use and associated greenhouse gas emissions for our meter reading program.

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Also in this issue:

Our annual change to chlorine disinfection in March.
(please see other side)

CONTACT US

Orange Water and Sewer Authority
400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro, NC 27510

Customer Service phone and e-mail:
919.537.4343 • customerinquiries@owasa.org

Office Hours: 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday-Friday

Emergencies and Main Office phone:
919.968.4421 • www.owasa.org • info@owasa.org

Safety... *(continued from front)*

If you have questions during business hours about our drinking water, please contact the Laboratory staff at our **Jones Ferry Road Water Treatment Plant** at **919.537.4228** or **WTPLaboratory@owasa.org**. For the results of our overall water testing, please visit our website and use the search tool to see our annual Water Quality Report Card.

You can contact us at any time at **919.968.4421** with questions or comments about drinking water or any of our services. Our highly trained staff is on duty around the clock to ensure the safety of our drinking water.

Meter System... *(continued from front)*

Impact on customers' bills

Keeping our essential services affordable is one of OWASA's most important goals. Investing in an AMI system will not, by itself, lead to a rate increase for OWASA customers. The estimated \$6 million investment in AMI would be offset by avoiding planned investments in our current, less efficient water meter technology and by savings from operational efficiency improvements.

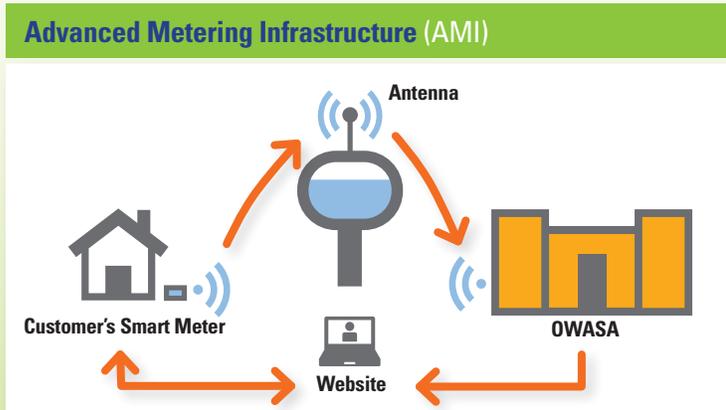
To get more information and participate in the discussion

Before the Board of Directors makes a final decision on March 24, 2016, there are a number of opportunities for you to get information and provide feedback:

- Visit our website at **www.owasa.org**
- E-mail us at **info@owasa.org**
- Write us at OWASA, Attn:
AMI Feedback, 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro, NC 27510
- Call us at **919.968.4421** or visit our office at 400 Jones Ferry Road in Carrboro.
- Attend and provide feedback at any of the following Board meetings:

Dates	Hour	Locations
February 25, 2016	7 PM	Chapel Hill Town Hall
March 10, 2016	6 PM	OWASA Community Room
March 24, 2016	7 PM	Chapel Hill Town Hall

We look forward to hearing from you!



Chlorine taste and odor in March and early April due to annual change in disinfection

In March, we will use chlorine instead of chloramines to disinfect our drinking water. Chloramines are a compound of chlorine and ammonia which OWASA has used since 2002 for disinfection in months other than March. Disinfection with chloramines has improved the overall quality of our water and its taste and odor. However, chlorine is a slightly stronger disinfectant. We use chlorine for disinfection one month per year to ensure a high level of disinfection in our water system in accord with recommendations from the NC Department of Environmental Quality.

To remove or neutralize chlorine in our water, you can:

- Add a few lemon slices to a pitcher of water. The lemon has ascorbic acid, which neutralizes the chlorine.
- Let water sit for a day or so. (We suggest keeping the water in an open container in a refrigerator.)

- Boil the water for one minute to evaporate the chlorine.
 - Filter the water with activated carbon. Water pitchers with activated carbon filters are sold locally.
- After neutralizing chlorine, refrigerate the water to help prevent bacteria from growing in the water.

What to do if our water is discolored in March and early April:

To more quickly circulate water with chlorine throughout our system, we will release water from fire hydrants in some areas. This "flushing" may cause discoloration in our water. This discoloration consists primarily of harmless sediment and air, which do not affect the safety of the water.

If your water is discolored, please run cold water through a spigot or faucet for 5 to 10 minutes. In the unlikely event this does not clear up the water, please call us at **919.968.4421**.

Español

Este boletín informativo contiene información sobre los servicios de agua y alcantarillado de **OWASA**. Para obtener una traducción, por favor llame al **919.537.4221** o mande un correo electrónico a: **info@owasa.org**. ¡Muchas gracias!