

# Frequently asked questions

## Chlorine



Water  
and Sewer

### Summary

Chlorine is the most widely used disinfectant for drinking water in Australia and around the world. Chlorine can eliminate disease-causing bacteria, viruses, and parasites present in the water, ensuring that it is clean, safe, and beneficial to the health, hygiene, and overall well-being of our community.

Chlorine levels within Central Coast Council's drinking water network comply with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG). The guidelines establish national standards for managing and supplying safe and aesthetic drinking water, based on the best available scientific evidence.

### What level of chlorine is in the drinking water supplied by Central Coast Council?

The concentration of chlorine in the drinking water supplied by Central Coast Council ranges generally from 0.5 to 1.5 mg/L. In the warmer seasons, chlorine concentrations may be marginally higher, increasing up to 2 mg/L.

### How does Council determine the appropriate levels of chlorine for drinking water?

The level recommendations for chlorine are determined by the ADWG. Based on health considerations, the guideline for chlorine residual should be less than 5 mg/L.

### How does Council monitor chlorine levels in the water?

Council monitors chlorine levels at every stage of the supply system. Water samples are taken before and after water treatment, at reservoirs, and from the distribution system before entering homes. This allows Council to adjust chlorine levels as required. All samples are tested by Council and/or independent laboratories accredited with the National Association of Testing Authorities.

### Is chlorine safe?

Ingesting chlorine in drinking water at levels below the recommended Australian Drinking Water Guidelines is not hazardous to human health.

### What type of chlorine is added to the water?

Gaseous chlorine is the preferred method of disinfection for chlorine leaving the treatment facility. This type of chlorine is utilised for its disinfection properties, minimal contact time with water, and its ability to produce higher chlorine residuals than other alternatives. Tablet chlorine is an optimal choice for reservoir chlorination due to its convenience and safety. The slow release of the chemical helps to maintain residuals in the network for longer periods of time.

**Central Coast Council** P: (02) 4306 7900 W: [centralcoast.nsw.gov.au](http://centralcoast.nsw.gov.au)

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### Why can I taste or smell chlorine in my water?

To ensure that disinfection is maintained throughout the network of pipes that deliver water from the treatment facility to your house, small amounts of chlorine may remain in your tap water. This is known as residual chlorine and may result in a slight scent or taste of chlorine when you turn on your tap. It is important to remember that some people are more sensitive to the taste and smell of chlorine than others. Over time the chlorine will eventually dissipate and leave the water. Simply filling up jugs of water and leaving them in the fridge should improve the taste and odour of chlorine.

### Why does the smell and taste of chlorine vary between different locations and seasons?

Chlorine is dosed at reservoirs, which means that the taste and smell of chlorine in your water may differ depending on your home's distance to a reservoir. When chlorine is added to water, it takes time to react and dissipate. As a result, the amount of residual chlorine in the water may differ by the time it reaches your home. If your home is situated further from the reservoir, you may expect lower chlorine levels in your drinking water compared to those residing closer to the reservoir. In warmer seasons, it may be necessary to raise the

chlorine residual levels to 2 mg/L. The reason for this is that chlorine tends to dissipate or exit the water at a faster pace in warmer weather. Therefore, to guarantee the safety of the water in the system, a higher chlorine residual must be introduced to the network.



### Related resources

- [Australian Drinking Water Guidelines | NHMRC](#)
- [Drinking water quality | Central Coast Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

### Get in touch

If you would like to report an issue, make a request, or offer feedback click [here](#).

Alternatively, you can call us on (02) 4306 7900 or send an email via:

[wscustomerliaison@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wscustomerliaison@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au)

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