



October 11th, 2024

Memorandum: Fluoridation Program Discontinuation

Dear Evergreen Metro District Water Customers,

At the August Board of Directors meeting for Evergreen Metropolitan District, the operational decision was made to discontinue the voluntary drinking water fluoridation program. Fluoride is naturally occurring, however some drinking water systems with a low fluoride concentration participate in the water fluoridation program to provide a public dental health benefit. The naturally occurring fluoride in Evergreen Lake is typically around 0.3 mg/L. Evergreen Metropolitan District has historically added fluoride during the treatment process to maintain the recommended 0.7 mg/L level. This addition of fluoride did not enhance the safety or aesthetics of drinking water.

The driving factor for discontinuing the fluoridation of the EMD drinking water is for the safety of the water treatment plant operators. The chemical used for fluoride addition is sodium fluorosilicate, a fine, white, odorless powder. It is toxic if swallowed, in contact with skin, or inhaled. It is one of the most dangerous chemicals handled by operators at the water treatment plant.

Also, the District is planning a major plant remodel of the chemical building where the fluoride is housed. Designing the building for use of fluoride increases the occupancy rating hazard, which requires more engineered controls. To ensure the safety of the drinking water during the remodel, phasing and temporary feed systems will need to be put in place. This is made difficult by the fact that there is very little space on site. Eliminating fluoridation from future design plans saves on engineering and operational costs while enabling a safer environment for the operators.

Proponents of community water fluoridation point to the public dental health and economic benefit of reducing cavities. However, given the prevalence of fluoride in toothpaste and modern accessibility of dental care, and the safety concerns for those making Evergreen's water safe, the decision was made to stop adding fluoride to the drinking water. As of October 2024, the EMD Water Department estimates it will run out of supply of fluoride in three to five months. The department will not be ordering additional fluoride for the year 2025.