

Upcoming Water Supply Conversion: What Residents Need to Know

Harris County FWSD 61 residents will begin receiving treated surface water instead of groundwater on or soon after January 7, 2026.

This conversion, managed by the North Harris County Regional Water Authority (NHCRWA), is part of a long-term plan to ensure reliable and sustainable water for our community. Please check Harris County FWSD 61's website for more information and an updated schedule of conversion.

We want residents to clearly understand:

- Why is this happening?
- What changes you may notice
- How Harris County Fresh Water Supply District 61 is ensuring continued reliability?
- Where to find trusted resources?

Why the change?

- **Preventing subsidence:** Excessive groundwater pumping has caused parts of Houston and Galveston to sink by as much as 9 feet since 1906, damaging infrastructure and increasing flood risks.
- **Providing sufficient total water supply** for the growth of the Houston region, whose population has grown from 1.8 million in 1970 to approximately 7 million today.
- Groundwater supply alone is insufficient to provide for existing and future growth.
- Role of subsidence Districts: The Harris-Galveston Subsidence District (HGSD) was formed in 1975 to regulate groundwater use and prevent further sinking. Learn more: [Our History - Harris Galveston Subsidence District](#)
- The Harris-Galveston Subsidence District requires all MUDs and public water systems to convert to mostly surface water per its Regulatory Plan. Learn More: [Regulatory Plan - Harris Galveston Subsidence District](#)
- The North Harris County Regional Water Authority (NHCRWA) was created in 1999 to prepare and implement a phased Groundwater Reduction Plan to meet HGSD's phased surface water conversion requirements. Learn More: [About NHCRWA - North Harris County Regional Water Authority \(NHCRWA\)](#)

1. Drinking Water Safety

- Your drinking water will remain safe, clean, and reliable. It is treated and tested to meet all US Environmental Agency and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Drinking Water Standards. Learn More: <Drinking Water Quality - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov>

2. Disinfectant Change: Chlorine → Chloramine

- The groundwater in Harris County Fresh Water Supply District 61 has been disinfected using chlorine but with surface water we will switch to using chloramine (monochloramine)
- Chloramine lasts longer in the water system and produces fewer regulated disinfection by-products. Learn More: <Chloramines in Drinking Water | US EPA>
- [See below for special considerations for dialysis machines and fish and aquatic animal tanks.](#)

3. Water Taste

- You may notice a difference in taste from Harris County Fresh Water Supply District 61's well water. Surface water tastes can vary from location to location just like well water tastes can vary from location to location.
- The water you receive in your home will continue to be safe to drink from the tap. If desired, some residents may want to use an activated carbon filter such as those most refrigerators now have or those installed under sinks or for the whole house which remove difference in tastes.

4. Water Hardness and color

- The NHCRWA surface water will be "softer" (less hardness) than the current Harris County Fresh Water Supply District 61 well water. Softer water will tend to produce fewer water spots on shower glass and less lime scale in pipes and water heaters.
- The softer water could dissolve some existing lime scale in the water pipes that serve our homes. Since lime scale may include iron, and the iron may initially appear as a light orange tint. This is expected to go away after a few weeks and is not harmful to humans or animals.
- In the initial transition to surface water, Harris County Fresh Water Supply District 61 will be flushing the water mains on a more frequent basis to remove this discoloration. In your own home, you may want to flush out your pipes by briefly running all faucets in the house if an orange tint is present, including water lines to your washing machine.

5. Backup Water Supply

- Harris County FWSD 61 will continue to maintain our 5 groundwater wells so they are always available to supplement the water provided by NHCRWA.
- In case of disruption in the regional supply, Harris County FWSD 61 can immediately switch back to using our wells to ensure uninterrupted service.

Special Considerations are located below. For most residents, no action is required:

Fish Owners & Aquatic Animal Aquariums:

- Chloramine can harm fish and amphibians if not removed. Note that traditional chlorine removal tablets are not enough to remove chloramine.
- Please research to determine the best method for your fish tank. Use products specifically designed to neutralize chloramine.
- Here are some articles that may provide more details: [About Chloramine | Fritz Aquatics](#)

6. Dialysis Patients

- Dialysis systems must remove chloramine before use. Dialysis centers are aware of this and adjust treatment accordingly.
- Those using a home dialysis machine should consult their doctor or equipment supplier.
- All healthcare facilities in Harris County Fresh Water Supply District 61 are aware of this change and have taken necessary steps to maintain safe operating conditions.
- Guidance: [About Water Disinfection with Chlorine and Chloramine | Drinking Water | CDC](#)

How do I stay informed? Sign up for **Water Smart** alerts at hcfwsd61.watersmart.com please encourage your neighbors to do the same. Direct residents to visit the Harris County Fresh Water Supply District 61's website <https://harriscountyfwsd61.org> which provides more general information, contact information, and maps of the District.