

OIA Ref: CAS-01858-Y3D1M4

9 August 2024

Mr Davies

[fyi-request-27620-dca58543@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-27620-dca58543@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Mr Davies

### **Request for information relating to use of chloramines by New Zealand water suppliers**

Thank you for your email dated 15 July 2024, requesting the following information to be provided under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*"1. Current and Historical Use of Chloramines by Water Suppliers in New Zealand:*

*- Please provide details of any water suppliers in New Zealand that are currently using chloramines as a disinfectant in their water supply.*

*- Please provide details of any water suppliers that have used chloramines in the past, even if such use was sporadic or temporary.*

*2. Regulatory Stance on Chloramination:*

*- If chloramines have not been used by any water suppliers in New Zealand to date, please provide information on whether chloramination is an acceptable means of water disinfection under current New Zealand regulations.*

*- clarify if there is a possibility that chloramination could be adopted as a water disinfection method in the future, according to current regulatory guidelines and policies.*

*- any supporting documents, reports, or communications related to the use of chloramines in New Zealand's water supply and the regulatory stance on this disinfection method?"*

Our response to your request is set out below.

### **Response**

#### **Background**

1. As the water services regulator for Aotearoa New Zealand, we helped develop the [Drinking Water Standards \(Standards\)](#), and are responsible for making the [Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules \(Rules\)](#), [Aesthetic Values](#), and [Acceptable Solutions](#). Collectively, these set minimum requirements for drinking water suppliers and help ensure communities receive safe drinking water.
2. The Standards contain Maximum Acceptable Values (MAVs) of 120 chemicals in drinking water. The MAV is the level of a determinand<sup>1</sup> which should not be exceeded. Chloramines is a determinand that can be identified in drinking water supplies. It can arise from natural source water reactions, or through the usage as a disinfectant/treatment option.

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<sup>1</sup> A substance or characteristic that is determined or estimated in drinking water. This can be chemical, microbiological or radiological.

3. The Rules set out the minimum compliance requirements that drinking water suppliers need to fulfil to ensure that the water provided to consumers is safe to drink. Drinking water suppliers are required to report to us on compliance with the Rules when a drinking water supply is operating. The Rules don't provide for the use of chloramines as a treatment method for drinking water.

#### **Current and Historical Use of Chloramines by Water Suppliers in New Zealand**

4. Since we implemented the Rules on 25 July 2022, we haven't received any information about any drinking water suppliers in New Zealand using chloramines as a disinfectant/treatment option. Chloramines may be formed as a disinfection by-product in some water supplies using chlorine as a disinfectant/treatment option for water treatment. We do not consider the formation of chloramines as a by-product of chlorine to be the same as deliberately using chloramines as a disinfectant/treatment option.
5. We are not aware of information on the use of chloramines as a disinfectant/treatment option by drinking water suppliers prior to us becoming the water services regulator.
6. As we do not hold any information on the use of chloramines as a disinfection treatment option by a New Zealand water supply, we are refusing this component of your request under Section 18(g)(i) of the OIA, on the grounds that we do not hold the information requested and we have no grounds for believing that the information is held by another government department.

#### **Further information on the use of chloramines**

7. To your questions about whether *there is a possibility that chloramination could be adopted as a water disinfection method in the future, according to current regulatory guidelines and policies; and your request for supporting documents, reports, or communications relating to the use of chloramines as a disinfection method, and the regulatory stance on this:*
  - a. there is currently no intention to enable use of chloramines as a disinfectant/treatment option; and
  - b. there is a possibility that this might be considered as part of Rules reviews in the future; however, there is no current intention to this effect.

#### **Right to complain**

You have the right by way of complaint to the Ombudsman under Section 28(3) of the OIA to seek an investigation and review of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi



Sara McFall  
Head of Systems, Strategy and Performance