

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****September 14, 2021**

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**SUBJECT: LIQUID OXYGEN SUPPLY FOR WATER TREATMENT**

This report responds to a City Council inquiry on national media coverage related to shortages of liquid oxygen used for water treatment.

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, the Orlando (Florida) Utilities Commission requested customers to conserve water due to a regional shortage of liquid oxygen linked to the surge of COVID-19 inpatient treatment affecting the supply of liquid oxygen available to the utility. As part of this request, residents were urged to immediately stop outdoor watering to reduce the amount of water required to be treated.

In the water treatment process, liquid oxygen is used to produce ozone. In Fort Worth, ozone is applied to raw water at the head of the water treatment process as the primary disinfectant and to control taste and odor. Chloramines are applied at the downstream portion of the treatment process which provide for secondary disinfection and to maintain the disinfection residual within the water distribution system.

When the situation in Orlando became public, Fort Worth checked with our liquid oxygen supplier to verify that our delivery of liquid oxygen would not be impacted. Our supplier confirmed that we are a high priority customer due to the criticality of providing potable water to the public and did not foresee any delivery interruptions.

It should be noted that Fort Worth does have the ability to meet potable water disinfection regulations without ozone by transitioning to free chlorine in place of ozone in the treatment process. As part of our response to this issue, our operations staff has inspected the free chlorine feed system in order to have it available if liquid oxygen supply is disrupted in the future. Should Fort Worth be forced to transition to free chlorine for primary disinfection, we would anticipate an increase in the number of water quality complaints from customers due to taste and odor. We would try to mitigate these complaints by an extensive public outreach program that would highlight the temporary nature of the transition.

If you have questions concerning this report, please contact Chris Harder, Water Director, at 817-392-5020.

**David Cooke**  
**City Manager**