

MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION



THE FLOW N' GO

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NEW SEWER DEDUCT (SD) METER PROGRAM

The Water and Sewer Commission had received a request to review the current sewer deduct meter program, as residents often found the process cumbersome and confusing. A review was completed by the Commission on the existing program. A draft of the updated program was provided to the Commission, reviewed, and approved at the January meeting.

Moving forward, residents must purchase sewer deduct meter assembly's from the Water and Sewer Commission; rather than Gilbert & Cole or Ace Hardware.

Purchasing starts with a request to the Commission to initiate the process. A package will be provided with instructions, information, and an agreement to be signed by the property owner.

In order to receive the privilege of sewer deduct credit on ones bill, a plumbing permit shall first be obtained from the plumbing inspector who is located at the Town offices, 7 Widger Road. Next, the sewer deduct agreement shall be signed, a copy of the plumbing permit shall be provided, and payment received for the invoice. Home owners shall also abide by the Cross Connection Control Program, which is described in greater detail in the next section

of this newsletter.

Once all these items are completed, the sewer deduct meter can be collected by an owner representative at the Commission's office. A licensed plumber must install the sewer deduct meter and an approved backflow prevention device. Documentation of an approved plumbing inspection is required prior to scheduling a sewer deduct meter inspection with the Commission. At the time of the Commission's inspection, the touch pad and remote reader will be installed.

As with the previous policy, the sewer deduct meter is purchased and owned by the homeowner and the homeowner is entirely responsible for its maintenance and for ensuring that it is recording accurately. The Commission is in no way liable for deduct meters that fail to record usage. No deduct, or credit shall be given for usage that is not recorded on the meter. No sewer credit, refund, or abatement shall be given for malfunctioning, faulty, incorrectly installed meters, meters not having the required permits, inspections, or meters that have not been recognized and approved by the Water and Sewer Commission.

SD CREDIT PROCEDURE

1. Acquire plumbing permit
2. Purchase sewer deduct meter assembly from the Commission
3. Owner to sign sewer deduct meter agreement
4. Plumber to install sewer deduct meter and obtain plumbing inspection
5. Schedule a sewer deduct meter inspection with Commission
6. Upon passing inspection, sewer deduct meter credit will begin

Contact Information

781 631-0102
781 631-2694

Website
[Marblehead.org/
waterandsewer](http://Marblehead.org/waterandsewer)

Superintendent
Amy McHugh

Assistant Superintendent
Bethany Spangler

Office Manager
Dianne Rodgers

The Flow N' Go Editor
Paul Jalbert

Office Location
100 Tower Way

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1108
Marblehead, MA 01945

Sump Redirection Program
www.resump.org

DO YOU HAVE AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM? A BACKFLOW PREVENTER IS REQUIRED

The article above about installing a second meter to measure outside water use could be very valuable to home-owners who do a lot of outside watering. Whether you have an irrigation system or you water your little patch of lawn using your garden hose, doing so carries a responsibility.

What is your responsibility when using your irrigation, watering your lawn, or

washing your car? To make sure that you are protecting the public water supply.

It's a massive responsibility and one that the Water and Sewer Commission takes very seriously.

How do you fulfill this responsibility? By making sure your outside watering systems have what is known as a backflow prevention device (*continued on next page*).

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Is your irrigation system in compliance with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection regulations?

The Massachusetts DEP Cross Connection Control Program 310CMR 2222(9) *requires* that all irrigation systems have a backflow prevention device installed.

The Water and Sewer Commission is responsible for the protection of the public potable water distribution system from contaminants or pollutants. To ensure that our drinking water supply remains safe, the Commission has an established Cross Connection Control Program.

The purpose of the Cross Connection Control Program is to protect the public water supply, to promote the elimination or control of existing cross connections between potable water systems and non-potable systems, and to

provide for the maintenance of a continuing program of cross connection control which will effectively prevent the contamination or pollution of all potable water systems by cross connection.

As previously noted, a backflow preventer, or backflow device, is *required* for all irrigation systems, but is also used for any scenario with the potential of a cross connection. Even when using an outside spigot, a hose bib vacuum breaker is strongly recommended to prevent back siphonage events.

Approved devices on irrigation systems include an air pressure vacuum breaker or a reduced pressure zone backflow prevention device. Double-check valve backflow prevention devices are *not* approved by the DEP. These devices are described more fully on the water and sewer website.

What these devices do is prevent pollutants and contaminants from backflowing or being back siphoned into the drinking water system.

Lets say that your lawn has been treated with weed killing chemicals or chemical fertilizer. You are using your irrigation system to water the lawn when there is a sudden drop in water pressure in the water delivery system. This drop in pressure could result in the chemicals being siphoned, or pulled into, the drinking water system and polluting the water supply. A backflow device would prevent this from happening.

Marblehead's Cross Connection Control Program is very important, and very necessary. More information on the program, including the responsibilities of the homeowner, when a backflow device is required, backflow device testing requirements, and descriptions and illustrations of acceptable backflow devices can be found on the water and sewer website at www.marblehead.org/water. Click on the Water Department drop-down menu and select the Cross Connection Control Program tab.

IS A SEWER DEDUCT METER WORTH THE COST?

When you look at your water and sewer bill, you will see that water charges and sewer charges are billed separately at different rates. The amount owed for each commodity is based on every 100 cubic feet of water used.

Every household has a water meter that measures the amount of water coming into the residence. That measurement is used to bill for the water consumed and sewer collected.

After the water brought into the house is consumed, the majority of it exits the residence and goes into the Town's sanitary sewer system where it is collected and transferred for treatment as wastewater.

Since there is no separate meter to measure how much water actually enters the sewer system, it is projected that all water that comes into the house leaves via the sanitary sewer system.

What this means is that the homeowner may be paying sewer charges on water that does not enter the Town's sanitary sewer system. A second meter could be added to measure the water that is used to water your lawn or garden, to wash your car or boat, or to fill your pool or hot tub. For homeowners who use a lot of water outside, this could represent

significant savings.

The Marblehead Water and Sewer Commission is cognizant of this and allows homeowners to install a second meter, known as a sewer deduct meter, that measures the water that is used outside and doesn't enter the sewer system. The amount of water that passes through this sewer deduct meter is then credited on the sewer portion of the quarterly invoice.

Because there is a cost to purchase a sewer deduct meter, have it installed by a licensed plumber, and pay all associated fees, the homeowner needs to evaluate their outside usage to determine if the expense is justified and what the payback period might be.

