MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

# THE FLOW N' GO

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## MASS WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY URGES CONSERVATION

Given the extreme drought conditions that much of the United States—including Massachusetts and the North Shore— have experienced this year, many communities found it necessary to impose water restrictions. Luckily, Marblehead was not one of those communities.

Here at the Water and Sewer Commission, we received numerous calls over the summer from conscientious customers who inquired as to any outside watering restrictions and they were often surprised to hear that there were none in Marblehead. The callers were encouraged, however, to follow water conservation practices to preserve our water supply.

Marblehead receives its water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) which gets its water supply from the Quabbin Reservoir in central Massachusetts. According to the MWRA, as of January 1, 2017, the level of the Quabbin was at 79.1% of capacity, which is referred to as "Below Normal" operating range.

There are no mandatory restrictions for "Below Normal" levels at the Quabbin. The reservoir would need to fall to 65% of full capacity—the "Drought Warning" stage—before restrictions would be imposed.


Just because Marblehead had no restrictions this past summer doesn't mean that local consumers should consider their water as an unlimited resource and use it unnecessarily. That's why the MWRA is urging water conservation in its *Every Drop Counts!* campaign.

The MWRA website (www.mwra.com) has tips on how to save water—both indoors and outdoors. It includes suggestions to reduce water usage, how to find and fix leaks and many other water conservation ideas.

But does conservation really work? Over the last 30 -plus years, customers in the MWRA service area have reduced their average daily demand for water from 340 million gallons per day in 1980 to about 200 million gallons now. This represents a 41% decrease in water consumption.

For further information on saving water, consumers can also call the MWRA's water conservation line at (617) 242-SAVE.

If this current drought continues into the future and the Quabbin drops below 65% of capacity, the MWRA would likely issue a "Drought Warning" and could impose restrictions on member communities. It is then that we would realize that Every Drop really does Count!

## PLEASE DON'T LEAVE CASH IN PAYMENT DROP BOXES

For the convenience of our customers, Water and Sewer payments can be put in the drop box in the lobby of the National Grand Bank or in the red Town of Marblehead mail-like boxes located at Abbot Hall and in the parking lot of the Mary A. Alley Municipal Building on Widger Road. There is also a lockbox outside of our office on Tower Way for after-hours payments.

*These drop boxes should only be used when paying by check.*

If you are paying by cash, please come directly into the office instead of leaving cash in the drop-offs. The Water and Sewer Commission cannot be responsible for lost, stolen or misplaced cash payments that were made through these drop-offs.

## TIP OF THE QUARTER

Putting grease and fat down your sink can harden and cause blockages and costly back-ups, like the 15 *ton* "fatberg" found in the London, England sewer system. (Go to www. marblehead.org/document center/ view/7633 to see it.)

Hot water and drain cleaning products that claim to dissolve grease only push it down the line and cause problems elsewhere.

Do not put fat or grease (or *anything* but water) down your drains or garbage disposal.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## DO YOU PLOW SNOW AGAINST HYDRANTS OR CAUSE ICE BUILDUP ON SIDEWALKS?

In last quarter's issue of *The Flow N' Go*, we urged residents to prepare their home for winter weather. We suggested that they insulate their water pipes, caulk and weather-strip their windows near where the pipes are located and, during extremely frigid periods, allow warm air to circulate around the pipes.

Those who took our advice, hopefully, have not had any issues with freezing pipes so far this winter.

Now that your home's interior is protected from the cold, it's time to turn our attention to winter's outside menaces—namely, the snow and ice.

Snow, if piled up around fire hydrants, can prevent fire-fighters from getting access to water if there were to be a fire. Water in its frozen form, better know as *ice,* can present a slipping hazard for people and pets and could contribute to motor vehicular accidents.

When you plow or shovel your property, never put the snow near or on a fire hydrant. In fact, if you are able-bodied, it would be prudent to clear hydrants in your neighborhood.

Have a sump pump to rid your basement of water? Make sure that it pumps onto your property and doesn't end up draining onto the sidewalk or street. The water you pump out could freeze, causing falls or accidents.

(You should ***never*** drain your sump pump to a sink or anywhere that connects to the sanitary sewer system. This is ***illegal*** and penalties will be imposed.)

What is your incentive to not put snow on a hydrant or water onto the public way? A $50.00 fine should be motivation enough.

Article III, Section 162-9 of the Code of the Town of Marblehead provides that, "No person shall deposit or cause to be deposited any snow and/or ice on or against a fire hydrant or on any sidewalk or roadway." Further, Section 162-10 states that, "Whoever violates any section or provisions of this By-law shall be liable to a penalty of $50.00 for each offense."

Please do your part in keeping Marblehead and its residents safe during the winter months. Or it may cost you!

## DON'T BLOCK ACCESS TO PUMP STATIONS

While driving or walking around Marblehead, have you ever noticed the small brick buildings (like the one on Green Street, pictured to the right) or large ground-level metal plates (similar to the one on Nahant Street, pictured below) that are located throughout Town?

These are sewer pump stations that help to push Marblehead's waste through the (new) pipeline running under Salem Harbor to the South Essex Sewerage District treatment plant in Salem. There are 28 sewer sub-stations around town; most are located under ground.

Sewer department employees and equipment must have access to these stations at all times. If there were to be an issue with a pump and we can't get to it, raw sewerage could backup into homes near the station. Not good!

*That's why it's important that residents not park vehicles, trailers, boats or anything on or near the stations or lean anything on or against the building or the surrounding fence.*

Remember, if there is a backup because access was blocked, it will be the homes in the immediate area of the station that will have to deal with the resulting mess.

*Kids' Corner*

## Water Use Match Game

We all know that not wasting our water resources is important. But do you know how much water various activities actually use? Test your knowledge by drawing a line from the activity to the number of gallons of water that activity uses.

| **Activity** | **Gallons Used** |
|---|---|
| 1. Taking a shower | A. 30 gallons |
| 2. Watering the lawn | B. 180 gallons |
| 3. Washing the dishes | C. 4-7 gallons |
| 4. Washing clothes | D. 1/2 gallon |
| 5. Flushing the toilet | E. 39,090 gallons |
| 6. Brushing your teeth | F. 62,600 gallons |
| 7. Drinking | G. 15-30 gallons |
| 8. Produce 1 ton of steel | H. 9.3 gallons |
| 9. Process 1 can of fruit or vegetables | I. 1 gallon |
| 10. Manufacture a new car and its four tires | J. 9-20 gallons |

How do you think you did? Did you get them all correct? Which of these activities can you, yourself, change to save water? How would you change them? (Check your answers with the right answers below.)

Answers (according to the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency): 1-G, 2-B, 3-J, 4-A, 5-C, 6-I, 7-D, 8-F, 9-H, and 10-E