

MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION



THE FLOW N' GO

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WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES! HOW WET WAS IT?

Many of us can vividly remember receiving our 2020 summer and fall water bills and going into sticker shock, thinking there was no way that we could have used that much water. The many residents who called the Water and Sewer Commission office to inquire as to why their bill was so high, thinking that it was a mistake, were told that excessive outside watering was the likely cause.

Because Mother Nature was stingy with the rain last year, homeowners had to do a lot of outside watering to keep their grass green and flowers blooming.

What a difference a year makes!

This spring and summer was a whole different story, with rain falling on what often seemed like a daily basis. (While the yards and gardens were in their glory, the boaters and vacationers not so much.)

And those homeowners who took advantage of the natural source of water by adjusting the timers on their irrigation systems (or shutting them off altogether) were rewarded with lower water usage. Of course there were still some customers who didn't adjust their watering schedule, running the sprinklers even as it was pouring rain outside. Unfortunately, this will be reflected in their water bill.

Just how wet was the summer of 2021 compared to the summer of 2020 in Marblehead? Luckily, we have the local data to answer that.

For over 25 years, the Marblehead Water and Sewer Commission has maintained a weather reporting station located at the Commission office on Tower Way.

Water department staff has recorded the various climate data to report to the National



Weather Service on a daily basis. This data is accumulated over time to identify weather trends.

(In 2018, the Water and Sewer Commission was presented with an Honored Institution Award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) "in grateful recognition of 25 years of Weather Observations.")

The data collected shows that for the months of May, June, July, and August of 2020, Marblehead received a total of just 7.89 inches of precipitation. Compare that to the same period in 2021 when we received a total of 26.05 inches—more than three times the amount of rain as the previous year.

A look at the month-by-month breakdown is even more interesting.

In May, 2020, the Town received a total of just 1.70 inches of rain, with precipitation falling on 11 different days. There were only two more days of rain (13) during May, 2021 but the total amount of rain that fell on those days jumped to 5.56 inches.

The actual amount of measured rainfall for the month of June in both years was almost identical, with 1.69 inches falling in 2020 and 1.87 inches falling in 2021. June, 2020 actually saw more rainy days than did

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Receipt of On-line bank payments can be delayed

If you pay your water and sewer bill using your financial institution's on-line payment system, please keep in mind that it can take two weeks or more for the payment to reach our office and time your payment accordingly.

Your financial institution's on-line processor prepares an actual paper check and mails it to the Commission. Payment is not automatically transferred.

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Sump Redirection Program
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TIPS TO GET US THROUGH THE FALL AND WINTER MONTHS

Now that the (rainy) summer is behind us and the leaves on the trees have burst into their autumn colors and have started to drop, a few preparations now will help us to ease into the fall and winter months ahead.

Since *The Flow N' Go* started back in 2013, the fall issue has traditionally offered tips to help our customers prepare for the harsh winter weather that we can often get in New England. These tips have included steps that we can take now to prevent our water lines from freezing to what to do if we didn't pay attention and our water pipes did freeze.

While much more information is available by reading the past issues of *The Flow N' Go* on the Water and Sewer Commission website at www.marblehead.org/water, we thought that it would be a

good idea to briefly touch on some of these preparations now. A little precaution can save a lot of headaches (and expenses) down the road.

- **Keep storm drains clear**—If it is safe to do so, clear storm drains (those grate-like steel covers along the side of the road) of leaves and other debris. Blocked drains can result in flooding that could cause water to back up into neighboring homes.
- **Protect water pipes from Freezing** — Eliminate sources of cold drafts near water lines and at the water meter by insulating walls and around windows.
- **Wrap pipes with insulation**— Use insulation or ready-made pipe

wrapping to protect water pipes from freezing.

- **Turn off outside water connections**—Turn off the outside faucets at the interior valve and drain the pipes.
- **Open cabinet doors below sinks**— Exposing water pipes to the warmer room air will help to prevent the sink pipes from freezing.
- **Turn on water at a trickle**—If it is very cold outside, run the faucets at a slow trickle. The slow-moving water in the pipe will help to prevent a freeze-up.
- **Know where your water service valve is located**—Knowing where the shut-off is located will allow for a quick shut-off in an emergency.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES!

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June, 2021 with 11 days versus 8 days, respectively.

Then there was July, the month in 2021 that many of us would like to forget.

In July of 2020, Marblehead saw only 2.59 total inches of rain for the entire month. (Remember that high water usage on your bill?) Those 2.59 inches were spread out over 11 days, meaning that only a miniscule amount of water dropped on any given day—not nearly enough to relieve the excessively dry conditions. (The “wettest” day of the month was July 24, when .89 of an inch fell.)

This past July, 2021, was a different story altogether. Marblehead received 11.63 inches of rain with precipitation falling on 21 of the 31 days in the month.

Not to rub salt into the wound but we started the month off with nine straight days with at least some

measurable rainfall. (And if we were to include the rain that fell on June 30, that would make ten days in a row.)

The day with the most rainfall was July 9, when 2.73 inches fell, followed closely by the 2.25 inches that fell on July 2.

August, 2021, continued the trend. While August 2020 had more days with measured rainfall (14 as opposed to only ten in 2021) this past August had over five inches more rain with a total of 6.99 inches to the 1.91 inches that fell in August 2020.

The data just confirms what we all already knew: During the summer of 2020, we needed to run our irrigation systems almost continuously to keep our lawns green. In the summer of 2021, we were out in the yard with a broom pushing the water away to keep our lawn from drowning.

What a difference a year made!

2020 vs. 2021 TEMPERATURES

Besides precipitation data, the Commission's weather station also records daily temperature highs and lows for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

While many people were of the opinion that this summer was extremely hot as compared to last year, the actual temperatures in Marblehead were not that far off from the previous summer.

For the month of May, 2020, the average high temperature was 64.6 degrees with an average low for the month of 44.8 degrees. In 2021, the average high for May was 65.7 degrees with an average low of 40.3.

In June of 2020, the average monthly high was 74.8 degrees with an average low of 53.4 degrees. In 2021, the June averages were 74.2 degrees and 54.8 degrees, respectively.

The average high temperature for July, 2020 was 80.6 and the average low was 58.0 degrees. In 2021, the average high temperature was 76.8 degrees with an average low of 59.8.

And the average high temperature for August, 2020 was 79.5 with the average low being 59.2 degrees. In 2021, the averages were a high of 80.3 and low of 64.5 degrees.