

# MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION



# THE FLOW N' GO

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## THE COST OF PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT IS WORTH IT

We often get questions of what makes up the cost of sewer collection and treatment. All revenue collected from the sewer rate goes into the maintenance, operation, and improvements of the sanitary sewer system (shown to the right). The end result of the collection and treatment of wastewater is high quality recycled water that is returned to the Salem Sound.

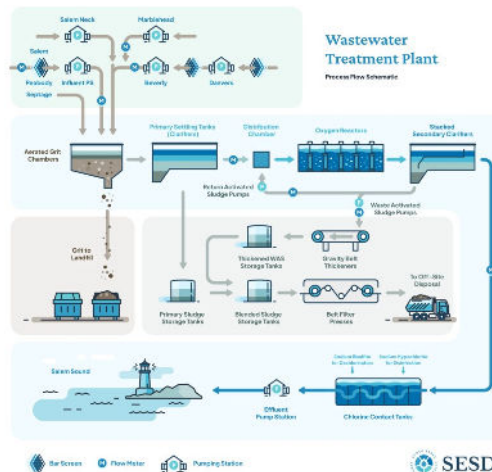
What makes up wastewater? All water that gets flushed down a toilet or that goes down a household drain becomes wastewater. Some things that turn clean water into wastewater include: human waste, food scraps, household and industrial chemicals, and oils and soaps. This wastewater is collected then treated to remove all harmful chemicals with the goal of a high quality recycled water to enter the Salem Sound.

### Sanitary Sewer System

When referring to the sanitary sewer system, this includes municipal collection systems and the wastewater treatment plant.

### Collection of Wastewater

The Marblehead collection system is made up of 7,900 sewer service connections, over 100 miles of sewer main, 3,000 sewer manholes, and 28 sewer pumping stations that work together to collect and deliver wastewater to the South Essex Sewerage District (SESD) for treatment. The Marblehead Sewer Department works 365 days a year to maintain these assets and ensure the safe delivery of wastewater to the treatment plant. To succeed in this goal, all pump stations are inspected and maintained daily; sewer pipe is routinely inspected to identify imperfections and infiltration; sewer manholes are cleared of obstructions and repaired; roots and grease are cleared utilizing high pressure cleaning and vacuum trucks; and emergency and minor repairs are completed as needed in-house by



the Sewer Department. Capital improvements projects are added to the 5 year plan and put out to public bid.

### SESD—Wastewater Treatment Plant

SESD's treatment facility is a secondary wastewater treatment plant designed to treat up to 29.7 million gallons per day (mgd). The process includes pumping, screening, de-gritting, settling, biological treatment, disinfection, odor control, and biosolids management. Using best management practices, the facility works to conserve and reduce energy use throughout this process.

The crew at SESD works hard 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to operate the wastewater treatment plant and ensure that wastewater is treated effectively prior to being pumped back into the Salem Sound. Four essential steps ensure that this process is effective and safe for the environment. Collection, Primary Treatment, Secondary Treatment, and production of Recycled Water.

SESD protects sensitive aquatic species and other environmental hazards by dechlorinating the recycled water before it is diffused into the Salem Sound.

## TAKE DIVE INTO THE SALEM SOUND

For more information on the SESD treatment process and what they do to protect the Salem Sound, visit their website at [www.sesd.com](http://www.sesd.com)

Here you can explore the in depth treatment process and the work associated with protecting our environment .



### Contact Information

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Website

[Marbleheadma.gov/  
water-sewer-  
commission/](http://Marbleheadma.gov/water-sewer-commission/)

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Sump Redirection Program  
[www.resump.org](http://www.resump.org)



**THE COST OF PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT IS WORTH IT**

Along with treated wastewater, Stormwater also enters the receiving waters around Marblehead. Stormwater is redirected through the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) to the waters of the Commonwealth

**Stormwater**

Stormwater is water that originates from precipitation (storms), including heavy rain and melted hail or snow. Stormwater is free of pollutants until it travels over land, where it may pick up oil and bacteria. Once in the stormwater collection system, trash inside of catch basins and illicit connections to the stormwater collection system can also add pollutants.

**Storm Water Collection System (MS4)**

This MS4 system and the stormwater that enters it is regulated under the Clean Water Act, specifically the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The Town’s NPDES MS4 permit is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

The Town’s Stormwater Management Program is in place to meet permit requirements and prevent harmful pollutants from being washed or dumped into the MS4. Measures include public education and outreach, public involvement and

participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction site monitoring. The cost associated with Stormwater are the system maintenance, repair and cleaning of structures that remove pollutants. Storm Water is a division of the Department of Public Works—for more information go to Marbleheadma.gov’s Stormwater page



**WATER SERVICE LINE IDENTIFICATION: A METICULOUS PROCESS**

It has been about a year since our last update on Marblehead’s water service line inventory. Throughout this last year, the water department has continued to perform in-depth investigations to try and identify all of the current “unknown” water service lines within the system. To date, no lead service lines have been uncovered and there is still no indication that any were ever installed.

Marblehead’s water system dates back to the 1890’s and has continued to be improved throughout today. A total of over 8,000 water services exist in Marblehead and each require a review of the installation date and recorded service line material. The water department has successfully identified 90% of these 8,000 services; leaving a small handful to be in the “unknown” category.

If a portion of your water service is still classified as “unknown”, you would have received a letter in December 2025 detailing next steps you can take.

Excavation will be taking place in Spring 2026 for service lines that are unable to be identified through in-home inspections.

There are multiple options that can be taken by homeowners to assist us in identifying service line material.

**Option 1:** Complete the online survey at Mass Lead Service Line Identification (MA-LSLI) Web App (or the QR code to the right)



**Option 2:** Complete the survey included with your invoice and return to the Commission.

**Option 3:** Contact the Water Department and request an appointment.

In order to complete the service line survey, you will first need to locate your water meter. Water meters are typically located inside the basement, crawlspace, or garage. Once the water meter has been located, the service line should not be far away. This line should be near the water meter on the same wall, also near the water shutoff valve. Photos taken should include where the water service comes in through the floor or foundation wall. To the right is a guide to service line material types and identification tips.

**Plastic:**  
Can be various colors such as white, blue, black, green,

**Copper:**  
Will appear as an orange or brown color, like a penny.

**Galvanized Steel/Iron:**  
Will appear as a dull shade of gray when scratched.

**Lead:**  
Will appear as a shiny silver and flakes when scratched.