

# MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION



# THE FLOW N' GO

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## DESIRE DOWNTOWN DRAIN DETOUR DETAILS?

Unless you have been away for several months and are just returning to Marblehead, you have probably noticed—and been directed around—one of the many detours in the downtown area that were necessitated by the on-going drain replacement project.

(The drain upgrade is being funded by the Town but the Water and Sewer Commission is overseeing the project on the Town's behalf, as it does for all of the Town's drain work.)

All detours are inconvenient. And by the time you reach the posted area, your choice of alternate routes is limited.

Did you know that there are several ways through

which you can get advance notice of the detours so that you can avoid the detour disorder altogether?

You can sign up to receive automatic e-mail notifications when new updates are available. To do this simply click on the "E-mail Subscription Service" icon on the left side of the homepage, provide your contact information and select "Marblehead Drainage Project Updates." (You will also have the opportunity to choose to receive information from other departments, including the water and sewer departments.)

In addition, the police department sends out updates on detours and road closures on Twitter

(@mheadpolice) and on Facebook.

Technical information on the project can be found at [www.marblehead.org](http://www.marblehead.org) and clicking on the "Local Announcements" link. There is also a link on the Drain Department page to a PowerPoint presentation on the project (Town Government > Water and Sewer Commission > Drain).

Isn't technology wonderful. With the website, Twitter and Facebook you can get advanced notice of the trouble spots and avoid that area altogether.

Only one problem: Now you won't be able to use the traffic congestion as an excuse for being late for work. Sorry!

## TIP OF THE QUARTER

### Leaky Toilet?

Is your toilet leaking? You may have a leak that you're not even aware of. Pin-point size leaks can use thousands of gallons of water. Test for a leak by putting food coloring into the tank and letting it sit for an hour. If any of the color appears in the bowl, you have a leak that needs to be repaired.

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## KEEPING DRAINS CLEAR PREVENTS FLOODING



The Fall season is beautiful in New England. The air turns crisp and the leaves on the trees turn from summery green to hues of bright red, orange and yellow. It's a photographer's dream.

And Marblehead is no

exception. There is something special about seeing a tree bursting with color with Marblehead Harbor (and its few remaining sailboats) as its backdrop.

But soon those colorful leaves will turn a drab brown and flutter gracefully from their perch above to

their bed below, a sure sign of the on-coming winter. (Shhhh!)

While beautiful when they are still attached to their bearer, these same once-colorful leaves can create major problems when they leave the nest

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## GARBAGE DISPOSALS: YOU GRIND IT AND WE REMOVE IT

Did you know that you shouldn't be putting your garbage through your garbage disposal?

*What?* you say.

That's right. Kitchen waste should be composted or disposed of in your garbage can and not down the sink.

*Why?* you ask.

Because what you grind in your disposal ends up in the sanitary sewer system. It then makes it's way under Salem Harbor to the South Essex Sewer District facility in Salem for treatment.

The treatment process requires that all materials be removed from the flow that is received. The more materials in the flow, the more costly it is to treat the water.

Remember — if you grind it, we have to remove it. And that costs **you** money.

*Is there anything else that I shouldn't put down the drain?* you inquire.

Fat. Meat fats from your bacon or hamburgers; chicken fat; or vegetable fats like that solid shortening sold in a container and which name we shall not mention.

When hot, these fats appear in liquid form and are easily poured down the sink drain. But once they cool off, they turn solid and sticky once again.

*So, what is the problem?* you query.

It's a big problem.

Do you recall the article

in last quarter's newsletter pleading with our customers to not flush any of those popular sanitizing or cleaning wipes down the toilet—even if the container says that they are flushable—because they can clog the pump station impellers and cause costly damage?

Well, add fat to the mix and it could cause massive problems.

*How massive?* you ask.

How about 15-ton massive!

That's the size of the glob — given the title of "fatberg"- recently removed from the sewers of London, England. Can you imagine what this stuff could do to your home's sewer lines?

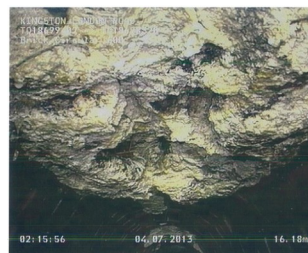
(An actual picture of the "fatberg" appears at right.)

The fatberg was described as a "pulpy aggregation of cooking fat and flushed wet wipes ... that congealed (into) a wet mash the size of a bus that smelled like the worst wet dog you can ever think of."

Fifteen ton of it.

So you can see why we ask that you not flush the so-called disposable wipes or put kitchen scraps or fat down the drain.

We will borrow the slogan from London's educational program: "Bin it—don't block it."



### KEEP STORM DRAINS CLEAR (CONTINUED)

and blanket the ground.

Besides its beauty, Fall in New England is also known for its major rain events. (Remember last October's Hurricane Sandy or the heavy rain on October 4, 2011?)

These storms, which can dump several inches of water in a very short period of time, can cause dangerous flooding of streets and serious damage to basements.

One way to help alleviate some of this potential flooding is by keeping the storm drains in your neighborhood clear of the fallen leaves and other debris.

(The storm drains are those grate-like steel covers that are usually found along the side of the road. They are sometimes described as looking like a huge waffle with holes. Hold the maple syrup.)

It takes just a few minutes to clear the drains. Make sure that you actually take the debris away and not leave it in the gutter where it can create a dam for the rain water.

A couple of minutes can possibly save you and your neighbors' houses from costly water damage.

### DO YOU NEED WATER LINE INSURANCE?

Many residents in Marblehead have received a solicitation from a company offering to sell them water line protection insurance.

*The Water and Sewer Commission is **not** associated with this company or the offer for insurance nor does it either endorse or discourage the purchase of such insurance.*

So, do you really need it?

The homeowner owns their water line from the curb stop to their house. Any break or maintenance to this section of the water line is their responsibility.

While breaks to the water line can happen, they are rare.

Excavation is the largest expense in making repairs. Does this insurance policy cover excavation costs?

Does your current homeowner's insurance policy cover breaks or maintenance to your water lines? Call your insurance agent to ask.

The best advice that we can give you before buying a water line protection insurance policy, or any insurance policy, is to read the fine print.