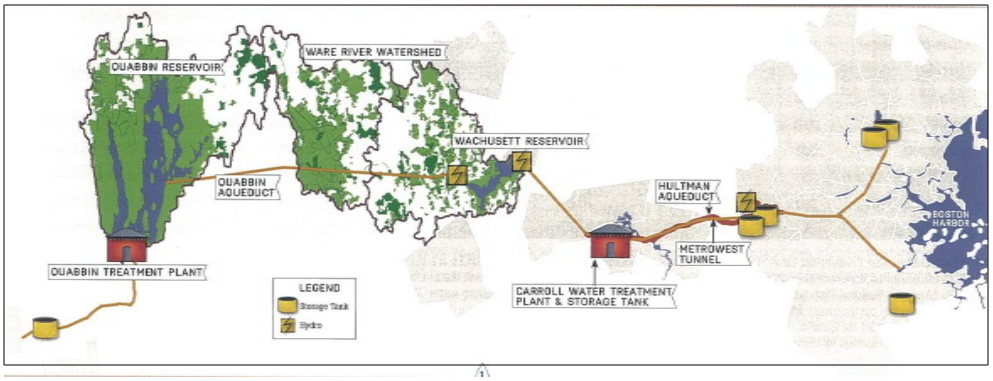
MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

THE FLOW N' GO

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4 APRIL / MAY / JUNE 2014

WHERE DOES MARBLEHEAD GET ITS WATER?



The Town of Marblehead is surrounded on three sides by water. But this water is only good for sailing and fishing and for cooling off on those warm summer days. It wouldn't taste very good if we used it for drinking water.

So where does Marblehead get its drinking water?

When you run the water in your home, every drop that comes out of the faucet has traveled over 90 miles to reach its destination. And Marblehead is the very last stop on the water's trip eastward.

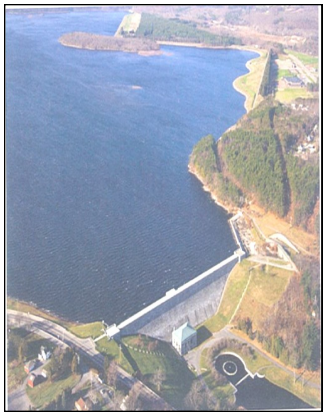
Marblehead's drinking water comes from the Quabbin Reservoir, which is located in central Massachusetts. It was built in the 1930's to provide clean drinking water for the Boston region.

Notice that we said *built*. The Quabbin is not a naturally-formed reservoir. It was actually constructed where the Massachusetts towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, Prescott and parts of seven other towns were once located. The entire population of these four towns had to be relocated. Hundreds of homes, businesses, a state highway, a railroad line and 34 cemeteries were also dismantled or moved. The area was then flooded for a reservoir.

The Quabbin Reservoir is one of the largest man-made public water supplies in the United States. It covers 39 square miles, is 18 miles long and has 181 miles of shoreline. The Quabbin has a capacity of 412 billion gallons of water.

Today, the Quabbin supplies water to 51 communities, including Marblehead. On its way east it travels through a treatment plant to assure the finest quality of water for our residents.

So, when you turn on the faucet at your kitchen sink for a drink of cool refreshing water or the showerhead in your bathroom for a hot relaxing shower, be kind to the water that comes out. Remember, it has traveled a long distance for your pleasure.



TIP OF THE QUARTER

A simple tip to help save on water costs:

If your kitchen faucet does not have an aerator, you could be using water at the rate of 3 to 7 gallons per minute.

Installing a low-flow faucet aerator to mix air with the tap water reduces the flow to 1.5 to 2.5 gallons per minute.

CONTACT INFORMATION

781 631-0102
781 631-2694
781 631-2670 (FAX)

Marblehead.org/waterandsewer

Superintendent
Amy McHugh

Assistant Superintendent
Bradley Perron

Office Manager
Paul Jalbert

Office Location
100 Tower Way
Building #11

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

DID YOU KNOW: YOUR HOSE MAY BE A HEALTH HAZARD

The poor, lowly hose is an under-appreciated tool that we take for advantage. We water our flowers and gardens with it; we use it to wash our cars; we fill our pools with it and our kids run under the water it feeds to our lawn sprinklers.

We can only imagine what life would be like without our friend the hose. We would have to form bucket brigades to get water from one place to another.

But lurking under that helpful, simplistic appearance is a potential hazard to your family's health—and possibly to the health of every citizen in Marblehead and beyond.

What in the heck are we talking about, you ask?

Do you apply insecticide to your lawn or fertilizer to your garden using one of those mixers that connect to your hose? Do you use your hose to fill a bucket with water to wash your car? Do you attach a hose to your kitchen sink faucet to fill your fish tank?

If your answer to any of these questions is "yes," then you could be inviting a very serious hazard into your home and the homes of others.

When the end of a hose is submerged—like in that insecticide applicator or in that bucket of dirty, soapy water or in that fish tank—chemicals and poisons and bacteria could be drawn back into the water pipes serving your home and even into the water supply serving the town.

This would not be a good way to get your family to eat fish for dinner.

And, the end of the hose doesn't even have to be submerged for dangerous poisons and bacteria to be drawn in. If you have an underground irrigation system, you run the risk of having any chemicals that you apply to your lawn or any bacteria left on your lawn by the neighbor's dog being sucked into the water supply.

This "backflow," as it is called, could happen if there was a sudden drop in the town's water pressure. A pressure drop could be caused by a water main break or by a hydrant being opened to fight a nearby fire.

By the time you find out about it, it would be too late.

But there are simple and inexpensive ways that you can prevent this from happening and protect your family and the water supply.

The easiest (and cheapest) is to be sure that your hose is always kept clear and the end is never submerged in water of any kind.

Another way is to install backflow prevention devices on all threaded faucets around your home. These devices are inexpensive and easy to install and can be purchased at most any hardware or plumbing supply store.

If you have an irrigation system, protection devises are not an option—they are ***required.***

Read the article below to make sure you are following the law.

Don't put your family and others in danger!

DOES YOUR IRRIGATION SYSTEM HAVE A BACKFLOW DEVICE?

If you read the article above, you now know that installing so-called backflow devices on your threaded faucets is a good idea. If you have an irrigation system not only is it a good idea, it is *required.*

Federal and state regulations, as well as local by-laws, require that all permanently-installed irrigation systems have, at minimum, a testable pressure vacuum breaker (a backflow preventer) installed.

(Please visit the Water Department's website at www.marblehead.org/water for further information on backflow device testing requirements.)

Failure of the homeowner to maintain a device in proper working order or failure to provide proof of inspection will result in the termination of water service.

Any homeowner with an in-ground sprinkler system is subject to the provisions of these regulations.

With the lawn-watering season approaching, many of you may be considering having a sprinkler system installed along with a second meter to measure the amount of water that goes outside. It is very important that the irrigation company or the homeowner contact the Water Department to inspect this installation. *Absolutely no credit will be given for installations that have not been approved* by the water department inspector.

The purpose of these regulations is to protect the public water supply from the possibility of contaminants or pollutants back-flowing into the water system.

For further information visit mass.gov/dep and search for"backflow preventer regulations."

Information on second meters can be found at marblehead. org/document center/view/7198 or at the Water and Sewer Commission office.