



THE FLOW N' GO

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DO YOU PUMP WATER FROM YOUR BASEMENT DOWN THE DRAIN OF YOUR LAUNDRY SINK?

Sending additional water into the sewer system, especially during periods of heavy rain, can over-tax the system and cause damage and flooding.

If you answered "Yes" to this question, then you are guilty of committing a misdemeanor.

Chapter 248, Article II, section 14 of the Code of the Town of Marblehead—more commonly known as the By-Laws—reads, "No person shall make connection of roof downspouts, exterior foundation drains, areaway drains, or other sources of surface runoff or groundwater to a building sewer or building drain which in turn is connected directly or indirectly to a public sanitary sewer."



Water that is pumped from your flooded basement into the laundry sink—or any type of sink, tub or toilet—ends up in the town's sanitary sewer system.

"They'll never find out that my sump pump is connected to the sink in my basement," you say?

If there is a suspicion that a resident is putting prohibited water down the sewer, section 26 of Article II allows for authorized employees of the sewer department "to enter all properties for the purposes of inspection, observation, measurement, sampling, and testing" to confirm compliance with the rules and regulations.

So you get caught. "No problem," you think. "I'll just reconnect the hose once they leave."

You could. But you should keep in mind that section 27B of the By-Law provides for a fine "not exceeding \$20.00 for each violation." And, each day that the violation continues is considered as a separate offense.

Knowing this, you decide that you had better play by the rules and pump the water to the outside. Just make sure that the hose empties onto your lawn or other pervious surface and not onto the sidewalk or street where it would freeze during the winter months.

Causing ice to form on a public way is not only dan-

gerous, it's also a violation of the By-Laws.

Article III, section 162-9 of Chapter 162 of the By-Laws reads, "No person shall deposit or cause to be deposited any snow and/or ice ... on any sidewalk or roadway." Further, section 162-10 provides that, "Whoever violates any section or provisions of this By-Law shall be liable to a penalty of \$50.00 for each offense."

If there is no place other than the sidewalk or street to pump the water from your basement, you may want to consider tying directly into the town's stormwater drain system (which is completely separate from the sanitary sewer system).

To do so, the homeowner must first execute a License Agreement with the Water and Sewer Commission. There is a \$25.00 fee for this license.

Further information on this can be found at www.Marblehead.org/waterandsewer. Click on Drain and select Sump Pump Connection.

TIP OF THE QUARTER

Write your account number on your check.

Even though you include the remit portion of your bill when making a payment, sometimes the check will become separated.

The account number on your check will assure that your payment is posted to your account and not someone else's.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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STOP FLUSHING MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN: REPLACE YOUR OLD TOILET

By now, everyone has received a water and sewer bill that reflects the new sewer rates that took affect on July 1.

(You may recall reading in the last issue of The Flow N' Go that sewer rates were increased to cover the cost of replacing two pipelines that run under Salem Harbor, transporting sewerage from Marblehead to the South Essex Sewerage District treatment facility in Salem.)

We have received many calls from our customers inquiring as to how they can reduce the amount of water they use and, accordingly, reduce their water and sewer bill.

There are numerous ways to conserve water, which we will be discussing in future issues. One is by replacing

your older-model water-guzzling toilet with a new, efficient low flow-toilet.

Low-flow toilets need only 1.6 gallons per flush, saving thousands of gallons each year. And many on the market today, unlike some earlier models, have received good reviews from consumers for overall performance.

Recent studies show that the number of flushes per household remains essentially the same in households using low-flow toilets as opposed to those with older toilets. The previous argument that low-flow toilets require multiple flushes no longer, dare we say it, holds water.

So, how much water can a low-flow 1.6 gallon toilet save?

If it is replacing a pre-



1980 model that uses 3.5 gallons per flush, the new toilet will save 1.9 gallons per flush, or 54%.

If the old toilet is a pre-1980 model that consumes 5 gallons with every flush, the newer toilet will reduce the water used by 3.4 gallons for a 68% savings per flush.

And, if your household still has the 7 gallon pre-1980 toilets—which many of us do—the savings would amount to a whopping 77% per flush. That's 5.4 gallons

of water less per flush going down the drain.

If you are not sure as to how much water your present toilet uses with every flush, contact your plumber and he or she can tell you. They can also assist you in purchasing and installing the low-flow toilet that is right for your family.

Stop flushing your money down the drain!

(Information provided by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority was used in this article.)



How Many Gallons of Water Are in a Cubic Foot?

You've read the article above about how much water a low-flow toilet can save and you are about to throw on your jacket and fly over to one of those big-box home improvement stores to buy yourself a 1.6 gallon-per-flush toilet.

You quickly glance at your most recent water and sewer bill, cursing at the amount of water you have wasted all these years and looking for

the number of gallons of water you used last quarter.

No matter how long and how hard you look at the bill, you can't find how many gallons of water you were charged for. All you see is your usage expressed in something called "cubic feet."

"Great," you think to yourself. "Marblehead measures water usage in cubic feet and not in gallons, so I'll never be able to figure out how much water I actually save by using a low-flow toilet. What good does all of this information do me?"

With some very simple math—and a calculator—you can easily convert your water usage measured in cubic feet to the number of gallons used.

There are approximately 748 gallons of water in 100 cubic feet—748.051949, to be exact. (Marblehead's water and sewer rates are per 100 cubic feet of usage.)

This means that if you built a box (waterproof, of course) that was 5 feet by 5 feet by 4 feet, it would hold somewhere in the vicinity of 748 gallons of water—give or

take a drop or two.

As an example, if your bill shows that you used 3,300 cubic feet you would simply divide the 3300 by 100 (this converts the measurement to hundred cubic feet) and multiply by 748 (gallons per hundred cubic feet):

$3300 \text{ divided by } 100 = 33$
 $33 \text{ multiplied by } 748 = 24,684.$

This customer used 24,684 gallons of water.

So head to the store to buy that low-flow toilet. You can now easily see how many gallons of water you save.