

# MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION



# THE FLOW N' GO

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## DISCHARGING SUMP PUMP INTO SEWER SYSTEM IS PUNISHABLE BY FINE

If your house is built on a high-water table area or your basement has water during heavy rains, then most likely you use a sump pump to keep your basement dry.

Do you know where the hose for your sump pump empties? If not, you should.

Chapter 248, Article II, Section 14 of the Code of the Town of Marblehead prohibits the connection of a sump pump hose (or any other water run-off connection) to the Town's sanitary sewer system. It 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."

If the hose from your sump pump empties into a sink, toilet or other similar structure or directly into your basement's sewer clean-out line, that is an illegal connection and must be removed immediately. Failure to do so may result in a fine and/or legal action.

Chapter 248-27 (B) of the Code provides that any person committing such violation shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and "shall be fined in the amount not exceeding \$20 for each violation," with each day the violation continues being considered a separate offense.

In addition, any person found to be violating this provision "shall become liable to the Town for any expense, loss or damage occasioned the Town by reason of such vio-

lation."

So where should the sump pump hose discharge?

The hose from your sump pump should direct all water outside to your yard where it will be absorbed by the ground. During times of freezing temperatures, however, it is important to make sure that your sump pump does not cause the formation of ice on the street or sidewalk.

Chapter 162, Article III, Section 162-9 of the Code reads, "No person shall deposit or

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cause to be deposited any snow and/or ice on or against a fire hydrant or 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."

A sump pump can be discharged into your yard as long as the water doesn't end up on the street or sidewalk.

If there is a Town stormwater drain in the vicinity of your residence, you are encouraged to discharge directly to the drainage system. (The stormwater drainage system is separate from the sanitary sewer system.)

For more information on the requirements to connect a sump pump to the drainage system, go to [www.marblehead.org](http://www.marblehead.org) and select Drain Department then click on 'Sump Pump Connection'.



## TIP OF THE QUARTER

Some of our most memorable storms occur during the fall months—the same months that trees cover the ground with their colorful leaves.

The combination of heavy rain and leaves blocking storm drains is a recipe for trouble.

If the water can't get into the drain because it is covered with leaves, severe flooding and damage could result.

If you see a storm drain blocked by leaves, please clear them away to open the drain.

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## DISPOSING OF PET WASTE DOWN STORM DRAINS COULD COST YOU \$THOUSANDS

You've read it before in the *Flow N' Go* but it is so important, it bears repeating. Whatever goes down the storm drains—including pollutants—ends up in the ocean.

Many people believe that the rain water, and anything else, that goes into the storm drains located along the side of the streets enters the sanitary sewer system for treatment. This is just not true. The storm drainage system and the sewer system are completely separate.

The sanitary sewer is a sealed system that takes waste from our homes and businesses and transports it under Salem Harbor to the South Essex Sewer District's treatment facility in Salem. The drainage system accepts storm water and anything else that flows with the water and deposits it in the ocean, untreated.

When our pets leave those little surprises, rain washes all that pet waste and bacteria into our storm drains. It travels through the drainage system and ends up polluting waterways — in our case, the Atlantic Ocean.

(The same goes for other pollutants like cars leaking oil, fertilizer from lawns and gardens and the chemicals found in some soaps used to wash cars. Rain washes these materials down the drain and into the Atlantic.)

It is estimated that waste produced by cats and dogs in the Charles River Watershed adds up to 5.932 pounds per day!

So why is pet waste such a problem? It presents a serious health risk to other pets and people, especially children. Pet waste is full of bacteria that can make people sick. When it drains into the ocean, the bacteria ends up in shellfish like shrimp and lobster and could make people who eat these ill.

This is why it is so important that dog-walkers carry plastic

bags to pick up the 'package' left behind by Fido and dispose of it properly. And that does not mean emptying it down the nearest drain.



The Water and Sewer Commission

and the Board of Health frequently receive calls and letters from residents reporting people who empty their pick-up bags (often dumping the bag with the contents) into the drain. Not only does this defeat the whole purpose of carrying a bag, it is also a violation of Massachusetts law and the perpetrator can be subject to severe penalties—both criminal and civil.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 270, Section 16-16A and Chapter 90, Section 22G provides for criminal fines of up to \$5,500 for the first offense and up to \$15,000 for each subsequent offense, along with potential seizure of your car. Civil penalties call for a \$20 fine for the first, second and third offenses in a calendar year and \$100 for a fourth or subsequent offense in a calendar year. In addition, under General Law Chapter 90, Section 22G, your driver's license may be suspended for up to seven days.

So, if you are not really concerned about the pollution you cause by dumping your pet's 'dump' down the storm drains, maybe a fine in the thousands of dollars will make you think twice.

*(Information from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Washington State Water Quality Consortium was used for this article.)*

### Kids' Corner

#### How many water-related words can you find in the box below?

S	P	R	I	N	K	L	E	R	Q	C	O	N	S	E	R	V	E	E	H	O	T
T	T	C	U	D	A	U	Q	A	M	A	T	R	U	K	E	A	C	P	E	N	A
O	X	Y	G	E	N	I	K	I	T	C	H	E	N	A	S	O	L	I	D	E	P
R	E	I	C	A	L	G	E	N	I	S	L	I	O	B	E	W	O	P	N	X	O
M	U	L	C	H	A	R	O	B	R	U	S	H	U	D	R	O	U	G	H	T	N
D	I	H	S	A	W	E	L	O	E	L	C	I	C	I	V	A	D	U	G	H	D
R	A	H	E	E	E	A	T	W	A	T	E	R	L	O	O	P	D	R	A	I	N
A	N	Y	O	S	S	R	Q	G	R	E	B	E	C	I	A	L	A	Q	R	L	
I	Y	D	L	O	C	E	U	T	E	R	U	T	A	R	E	P	M	E	T	I	
N	O	R	T	H	W	A	F	A	U	C	E	T	H	S	U	L	F	O	L	Y	A
O	W	A	R	E	D	A	R	O	N	U	P	A	R	A	N	E	W	E	D	T	H
C	O	N	S	E	R	V	E	A	M	O	F	N	E	A	U	A	S	S	D	W	U
U	N	T	O	H	I	I	E	E	W	F	I	K	E	L	E	V	L	A	U	O	M
B	S	O	T	O	P	E	Z	A	R	S	I	C	Y	L	C	E	P	E	P	D	I
I	O	A	K	U	S	E	E	V	A	P	O	R	A	T	E	S	T	R	E	E	D
C	B	T	O	N	T	C	S	B	R	U	M	K	P	T	T	S	O	R	F	G	I
F	L	O	O	D	M	I	W	S	E	M	E	U	Y	R	A	U	T	S	E	R	T
E	M	M	R	O	A	M	O	R	S	P	T	N	P	W	E	T	M	O	N	E	Y
E	R	S	B	E	E	L	L	E	Y	S	R	E	F	I	U	Q	A	L	L	E	W
T	E	L	I	O	T	A	F	D	E	H	S	R	E	T	A	W	G	R	A	S	S
R	E	W	O	H	S	O	A	K	G	E	L	B	A	H	S	U	L	F	N	O	N
I	R	R	I	G	A	T	I	O	N	T	D	R	O	P	I	N	D	R	A	I	N

- |                  |              |           |             |
|------------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| AQUA             | GLACIER      | OCEAN     | STORMDRAIN  |
| AQUADUCT         | GRASS        | OXYGEN    | SUN         |
| AQUIFIERS        | GREASE       | PIPE      | SWIM        |
| ATOMS            | HAIL         | PUMPS     | TANK        |
| BATH             | HOSE         | RAIN      | TAP         |
| BRUSH            | HOT          | RAINBOW   | TEMPERATURE |
| CLOUD            | HUMIDITY     | RESERVOIR | THIRTY TWO  |
| CONSERVE         | HYDRATE      | SEA       | DEGREES     |
| CUBIC FEET DRAIN | ICE          | SINK      | TOILET      |
| DRIPS            | ICEBERG      | SLEET     | TREE        |
| DROP IN DRAIN    | ICICLE       | SNOW      | WATER       |
| DROUGHT          | IRRIGATION   | SOAK      | WATERSHED   |
| ESTUARY          | KITCHEN      | SOLID     | WELL        |
| EVAPORATES       | LAKE         | SPRINKLER | WET         |
| FAUCET           | LEAVES       | STEAM     |             |
| FLOOD            | MONEY        |           |             |
| FLOW             | MULCH        |           |             |
| FLUSH            | MWRA         |           |             |
| FREEZES          | NONFLUSHABLE |           |             |
| GEYSER           | NORTH        |           |             |

For the solution (and a larger-print version), visit [www.marblehead.org](http://www.marblehead.org) and click on Departments > Water Department > Kids' Corner.