



THE FLOW N' GO

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EPA PUTS FOCUS ON STORM DRAIN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Because of the damage being caused to the environment by contaminants draining into our waterways from storm drain systems, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is increasing their efforts to educate the public on what they shouldn't be putting down the street drains. And Marblehead is joining in this campaign.

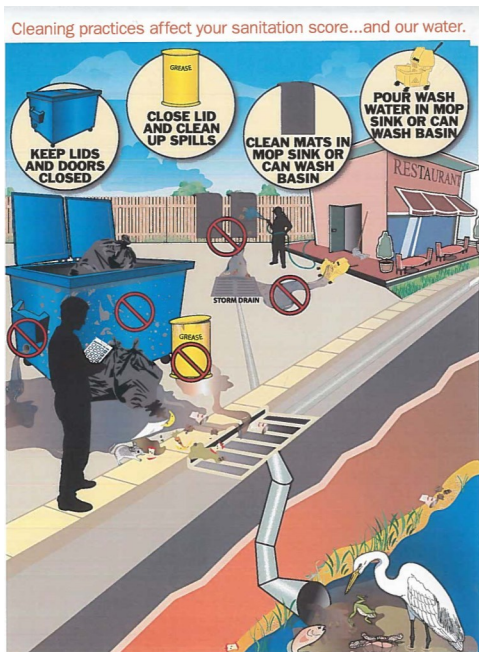
That is why you may soon see the poster to the right popping up in restaurants, public buildings and other establishments around town. While the poster is designed for eateries and businesses, the message it extolls is just as applicable to individual households.

Keep your trash can covers tightly closed: Just as businesses should secure their dumpsters, homeowners need to make sure that their trash barrels are shut tightly so that debris and possible contaminants won't fall or leak out and into the storm drain system. Open containers invite vermin to pull out trash or knock over barrels, possibly allowing discarded chemicals (such as cleaning liquids) to get washed into the drains.

Properly dispose of your cooking grease: Just like restaurants, you should never pour your used cooking grease or oil down the storm drains. Residents must make sure that they dispose of their cooking oil safely by storing it in a vessel such as a coffee can, sealing the can well, and placing it in the trash. Never put oil and grease down any household sink.

Clean car mats, door mats and small area rugs in your utility sink: Most residential homes have some sort of utility basin, usually located in their basement. This is where you should clean your mats and rugs. If you must wash these outside, make sure that the water doesn't go into a storm drain, bringing any cleaning solutions with it.

Empty floor washing water and rug shampoo



water in your utility sink: Again, these sinks are usually found in your basement. When you wash your floors or shampoo your rugs, don't discard the dirty water anywhere near a storm drain. If these chemicals are potent enough to clean dirty floors and carpets just imagine what it will do to the sea creatures that end up drinking it.

And while disposing of dog excrement may not be an issue for restaurants—at least we hope not—it is important that dog owners not toss their pet's goody bag into a storm drain. Previous articles in the *Flow N' Go* have warned dog owners of the ramifications (and potential fines) for doing this.

(These articles as well as all past issues of the *Flow N' Go* are available on our website at www.Marblehead.org/water. Also available on the drain department website at www.marblehead.org/drain is a nifty brochure, *Scoop the Poop*, that shows how doggie-do pollutes our waters and can cause illness in our children.)

TIP OF THE QUARTER

Did you know ...

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), from which Marblehead gets its water, uses a state-of-the-art system to monitor water quality 24 hours a day, seven days a week to make sure it is free of contaminants.

This allows the MWRA to respond to changes in water quality almost immediately.

To learn more about the testing, visit the MWRA's website at www.mwra.com.

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‘AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION...’ CAN PREVENT FROZEN PIPES

Every year in the fall issue of *The Flow N’ Go* we offer residents advise on how to prepare their home for winter, including how to protect their water pipes from freezing. And every January and February comes the inevitable calls from customers who didn’t heed the advise and now have a frozen water meter or water pipes.

Winterizing water pipes is a process that prepares household plumbing for freezing temperatures that can cause leaks and breaks. When water freezes it expands, which can cause the pipe to split or burst.

When this happens the homeowner is facing some very costly fixes. There would be the expense of hiring a plumber, the cost of purchasing a new water meter, the costs to repair any damage to the home, and the charge for the water that was used.

Benjamin Franklin’s axiom “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” can’t be more true than in preparing your home for winter. If you don’t want to take our advise you should definitely listen to Mr. Franklin by taking the following ‘preventions’ before winter arrives. Otherwise, the ‘cure’ may cause more anxiety than you can afford.

- Turn off the water to your outside

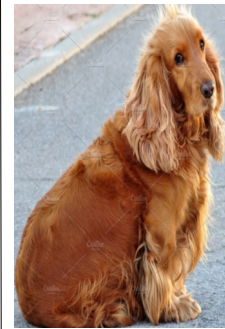
faucets and open valves on faucets to allow them to drain.

- Turn off your sprinkler system and blow compressed air through the lines to push any water out.
- Close or cover any vents and basement windows. Apply caulking and weather stripping if any cold air is seeping in.
- Use foam pipe insulation on any pipes exposed to the cold.
- Locate your water meter shut-off just in case you need to turn your water off in an emergency.
- During extremely cold periods, allow the faucet in your sinks to slowly trickle to keep the water in the pipes moving and open cabinet doors under the sinks to allow warm air to flow around the pipes.

If you chose to ignore both us and Ben and wake up on a freezing winter morning to find that you have no water for your shower, this may be an indication that your water pipes had frozen. What should you do?

Past issues of *The Flow N’ Go* have addressed what steps you will need to take to safely restore your water service. These can be found by going to our website at www.marblehead.org/ water and clicking on ‘The Flow N’ Go Quarterly Newsletter’ on the top left of the page. Then click on Volume 2, Issue 3 and Volume 4, Issue 2 to read more.

Could a dog be a water department’s best friend?



The Water and Sewer Commission is very proactive when it comes to preventing major water main leaks. For several years the Commission has contracted with a company that, using a highly technical computerized device, “listens” for moving water and produces a computer-generated map of potential water leaks.

Any area where water can be heard is tagged for further investigation. Often times it can be attributed to an underground stream. If the source of the sound can’t be identified the water department will probe further, possibly having to dig to find where the water is coming from.

But locating leaks with a detector may soon become a thing of the past. A water company in England has trained a Cocker Spaniel named Snipe to sniff out small leaks in their underground water system.

Snipe can detect trace amounts of chlorine used to disinfect the drinking water, distinguishing it from a natural water source. This enables workers to locate a leak more quickly and more precisely.

While underground water breaks will probably always be around, quicker and more accurate locating of a break could mean less digging and quicker repairs.

Kids’ Corner



Have you ever wondered what those things are at the side of your street that look like a giant waffle with holes? Those are storm water drains that takes rainwater from your street and empties it into the ocean.

But don’t pour maple syrup on them. The only thing that should go into these drains is water that falls from the sky.

Everything that enters these drains flows into the ocean off of Marblehead’s coast. That includes trash, grass clippings from your yard and anything else that the rainwater can carry with it.

And the fish don’t like it when we pollute their home. Just ask Freddy the Fish.

To hear Freddy tell you how things

that go down these drains ruin his home, go to the Marblehead website at www.marblehead.org/drain and click on “Only Rain Down the Storm Drain” in the brown box at the top left of the page.

Freddy will show you how the storm drain system works and what you should not be putting down the drain.

And you can sing and dance along with Freddy as he sings “Only Rain Down the Storm Drain.”