



Neighborhood Newsletter

Summer 2020

Hi Neighbor!

Do you know what takes place near the northwest corner of Howard Street and McCormick Boulevard in Skokie? The hardworking men and women of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) work around the clock at the Terrence J. O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant to treat wastewater, manage stormwater, improve our waterways and protect the source of the region's drinking water, Lake Michigan, to help safeguard the environment and public health. We want to make you aware of the latest information and MWRD resources that strengthen our community.



Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic

We are continuing to monitor information about the Coronavirus (COVID-19). We are following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Illinois Department of Public Health as we continue to provide water reclamation operations and stormwater management services 24 hours a day. Our O'Brien plant can clean up to 450 million gallons of wastewater in one day before sending it to the North Shore Channel as clean water.

Public tours of the plant and Open Houses are on hold for now due to COVID-19, but you can learn more about the [O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant](#) by visiting our [MWRD YouTube channel](#).

Odor Control Update

Reducing odors from the wastewater treatment process is one of our top priorities. Our strategies include odor monitoring controls and chemical dosing. However, we also need to hear from you if you notice odors coming from our facility. Please call us immediately at (800) 332-3867 to report odors so we may investigate. You may also use our Incident Reporting system on our website, [mwrdd.org](#), or by downloading the app on iTunes. You may also report waterway blockages or suspicious dumping into sewers or waterways.



Visit [mwrdd.org](#) and click on the "Incident Reporting" icon to report odor, water pollution, waterway blockages, or other incidents.

No Wipes Down the Pipes!

Please only flush pee, poop and toilet paper. Toilet paper is designed to break down easily in your plumbing and in the sewer system. Paper towels, tissues and wipes can potentially clog your plumbing or the municipal sewer in your neighborhood and contribute to basement backups and area flooding. Check out our new video on [YouTube](#) and other videos on our MWRD channel. Fats, oils and greases (FOGs) can also have a harmful impact on your plumbing and local sewers when improperly disposed down sinks and drains. Allow used cooking oil or grease to cool to room temperature. Then, pour it into a container, such as a can, jar or heat resistant plastic, and cover it securely before safely discarding it into the trash.



Stormwater Management Update

Managing our region's stormwater can be a tremendous challenge given record rainfall and intense storms that can flood our basements and streets. Every year we reach out to local governments so we may partner on local infrastructure projects to improve drainage systems and green infrastructure projects that capture water before it enters the sewer pipes. These water management projects store, infiltrate, and/or evaporate stormwater, thereby mimicking the natural water cycle. Completed green infrastructure partnerships with the MWRD include projects at the Village of Skokie Police Headquarters and the Skokie Park District's Devonshire Park to mitigate flooding through permeable pavement and natural landscaping.

We are happy to announce that the MWRD also recently selected the Skokie Green Alley Program as a local green infrastructure project to partner with and fund. Likewise, in Chicago's West Rogers Park neighborhood, we are joining our partners at Space to Grow to transform the schoolyard at Boone Elementary School with vibrant, permeable places to learn and play while capturing stormwater. In the Village of Lincolnwood, we are working on a project to construct a new storm sewer system that will protect homes from basement backups and drain into North Shore Channel along North Shore Avenue.

You can also help reduce flooding and basement backups at home. Our new "Green Neighbor Guide" (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)) features tools and ideas that help you install stormwater management projects on your property. We also provide flood prevention tips at mwrld.org. Reducing water use before and during storms can mitigate flooding and protect area water quality. "Overflow Action Alerts" remind us against running a dishwasher, washing machine, or taking a shower if there is an impending storm. This reduces the amount of water flowing down drains and provides sewers with more capacity to keep them from overflowing into local waterways. Sign up for Overflow Action Alerts at <https://bit.ly/311ijKO>.



Community Use of MWRD Land

The MWRD leases large parcels of land to local park districts for a nominal fee. As a large landowner, the MWRD prides itself on developing meaningful land use opportunities that promote recreational opportunities, like that at Skokie Sports Park and Skokie Sports Park East. We partnered with the Skokie Park District to grow grass on 6.5 acres of a remediated MWRD property at Skokie Sports Park East at McCormick Boulevard and Oakton Street for soccer and cricket. While we know many community events were placed on hold this year, we want to be sure that when life returns to normal, we provide an accessible park space from which everyone can benefit.


Jobs at the MWRD

Did you know that we have over 1,800 employees and over 200 job classifications? Explore career opportunities and sign up to receive examination notifications at <https://mwrld.org/careers>.

Free EQ Compost: Bring your own bucket and shovel

O'Brien WRP
3500 Howard Street, Skokie

Pick up compost anytime!
First come first served.



Are you looking for compost to enhance your garden this year? Look no further than 3500 Howard Street in Skokie! Bring your own shovel and bucket to pick up free EQ Compost for all of your yard projects.

Learn more at <https://mwrld.org/eq-compost>

Despite these uncertain times, our employees are working to make our community a better place to live. Please call (312) 751-6633 or email public.affairs@mwrld.org if you have any questions. You may also follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

If you would like to schedule a speaker for a virtual presentation, please contact our Community Education team at communityeducation@mwrld.org.

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