

## Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Advises Municipalities, Residents to Prevent Winter Flooding Through Proper Planning

With temperatures warming up after record-breaking cold the past few days, snowmelt and rain can lead to flooding in the Chicagoland region.

Frozen ground is unable to absorb water and snow, and run-off immediately flows to the sewers. In addition, ice can block storm drains and streams. As a result, flooding may occur when the sewer system becomes overwhelmed from the combination of normal sewage flow, rain water and snow melt.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is preparing for the flow by lowering water levels in the Chicago Area Waterway System to make room for runoff. In addition, our Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) tunnels, Majewski Reservoir, Thornton Composite Reservoir, and McCook Reservoir Stage I are ready to hold over 11 billion gallons of water.

Municipalities as well as the public can help plan for and minimize flooding by reducing water use. Postponing high water consumption activities such as bathing or showering, running dishwashers or washing clothes will also help provide maximum capacity in the local and intercepting sewer systems.

Other activities that can help minimize flooding include:

- Make sure storm drains are clear and not buried under snow drifts.
- Keep areas around streams free of floatable debris.
- If your home has a backwater valve installed on the sewer, follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning to ensure that it is functioning properly.
- Check your sump pump to make sure it is working properly.
- If your home or area is prone to flooding you may want to remove valuable items from basement floors.
- Keep your gutters clear. When they are blocked, water will pour over the edges, landing on the ground next to your home. If you have cracks in the concrete wall of your basement or problems with your tile, this water could enter your home.

If you see flooding, report it to your municipality; in Chicago, call 311.