



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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For immediate release November 21, 2012

Thanksgiving celebration offers opportunities to conserve water

When the first Thanksgiving celebration was held, there was no tap water, dishwashers, or washing machines. Today, the availability of these modern conveniences has resulted in a strong reliance on water.

In the meantime, Lake Michigan is at its lowest level in recent history due to last winter's lack of snow and this past summer's drought. As a result, water conservation is becoming more important than ever.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is encouraging Cook County's five million residents to make small changes in their use of water, beginning with the traditional Thanksgiving celebration.

"The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says that a family of four can use 400 gallons of water every day," said Commissioner Debra Shore, chairman of the MWRD's Stormwater Management Committee. "If each household makes a concerted effort to minimize their water use, it can become a habit to use less."

The MWRD teamed up with the U.S. EPA to become a "WaterSense partner" in 2012. WaterSense partners are ambassadors that help spread the water-efficiency message by educating the public. Since the entire metropolitan Chicago area evolved on a swampy marsh, it is vital that residents make a point of using less water so that sewer systems are allowed to work more efficiently to help reduce the possibility of flooding.

There are numerous opportunities for conserving water at Thanksgiving and throughout the year. While getting ready for the celebration, taking shorter showers, along with turning the water off when brushing your teeth, are the easiest steps to take.

"A timer can be an excellent tool for minimizing water use in the shower," said Commissioner Shore.

When the time comes to clean the holiday dishes, completely filling the dishwasher to capacity will result in fewer loads needing to be washed. Same thing goes for the washing machine.

In the event of a rainstorm, it is prudent to limit the use of water before and during the storm to minimize the amount of water that collects in the sewer system. Less water in the system provides more space for stormwater to collect which in turn can help prevent flooding.

More information about water conservation can be found at www.epa.gov/watersense.

Our water environment, Take it personally!

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.