



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Winter flooding alert

Rain is anticipated in the Chicago area on Thursday, and coupled with ice and snow melt, there is an immediate risk for flooding in the entire Chicagoland region.

Because the frozen ground can't absorb water and snow, run-off immediately flows to the sewers. In addition, ice can block storm drains and streams. 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 additional flow. To help minimize flooding, the MWRD is lowering water levels in the Chicago Area Waterway System to make room for runoff, and our Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) tunnels are ready to hold over two billion gallons of water.

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 help provide maximum capacity in the local and intercepting sewer systems. Making sure storm drains are clear and not buried under snow drifts and keeping areas around streams free of floatable debris can also help reduce flooding.

### **Additional actions that can help minimize flooding:**

- **Make sure storm drains are clear and not buried under snow drifts.**
- **Keep areas around streams free of floatable debris can also help reduce flooding,**
- **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 drainage tile, this water could enter your home.**

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

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**Our Water Environment: Take it personally.**

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