

# The Water Connection

Fall 2008

The newsletter for Concord Water customers

## Protect Our Sources

### Watch What Goes Down the Drain

Anybody walking around downtown Concord can't help but notice the little signs near storm drains admonishing the reader, "No dumping, drains to Mill Brook." It's easy to make the connection from a storm drain to a local stream or pond, especially during a rain storm when one can watch water pour into water bodies from outflow pipes. However, the connection from your kitchen and bathroom drains to your water tap is not so clear.

While most people realize the dangers of pouring oil or other hazardous materials into storm drains, keeping undesirable materials out of household wastewater is just as important.

Concord's drinking water comes primarily from groundwater wells. While the wells are on average 60 feet deep, the water table around town is fairly shallow, typically ranging from four to fifteen feet below the surface. Groundwater can be vulnerable to contamination from a variety of materials used in and around the house. Even a small amount of product could contaminate our groundwater.

Products such as pesticides, oil-based paint, fertilizers, medications, and automotive fluids should never be dumped on the ground or poured down the drain or toilet. They could end up in the groundwater or damage your septic system, and the Town's wastewater treat-

ment plant is not designed to remove these products. In addition, mixing these materials in the wastewater stream could cause a hazardous condition.

Household hazardous wastes can be brought to the Minuteman Regional Facility in Lexington once a month. Call CPW at (978) 318-3240 for dates this fall. Concord Public Works accepts used motor oil and uses it as heating fuel for the garage.



It can be dropped off at 133 Keyes Road weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Most auto mechanics will also accept used motor oil for a fee.

The Town's Composting Site off Walden Street near Route 2 has a paint shed where oil-based paint and related products can be taken. It is open Saturdays April through October from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. In fact, you may want to check out the paint shed the next time you're planning a painting or refinishing project to see what is available at no cost before you head to the store.

*Continued on reverse*

## WaterSense Program Expands



The US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense program is moving ahead with adding more appliances and fixtures to its list of products and services

bearing the WaterSense label. Qualified bathroom faucets now bear the WaterSense label, and certification procedures for water-efficient new homes, shower heads and urinals are now underway.

Labeled products have significant water savings over traditional products, just as the EnergyStar label has come to represent significantly more energy-efficient equipment. Using WaterSense labeled products and services will cut your water usage by at least 20 percent.

WaterSense helps conserve water by providing information on products and programs that save water without sacrificing performance. In fact, every average household that fully adopts water efficient products and practices saves 30,000 gallons per year—enough to supply a year of drinking water for 150 thirsty neighbors.

Right now there are currently over 200 models of high-efficiency toilets certified by WaterSense and more than two dozen irrigation professionals in Massachusetts who are program partners.

For a limited time only, Concord water customers replacing older toilets with WaterSense models are eligible for a rebate of up to \$250 per toilet.

By looking for the WaterSense label when making purchasing decisions, you can reduce your water bills and conserve resources for future generations. As a Promotional Partner with the WaterSense program, Concord Public Works will help keep you informed of the latest WaterSense products and opportunities. For more information, please visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense). ♪



## Concord Public Works Water and Sewer Division

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## Concord Water Recognized by State

Concord's Water Division was among 32 public water systems that were honored in a ceremony at the Massachusetts State House in Boston as part of National Drinking Water Week last spring. Concord received a Massachusetts Public Drinking Water Award, which recognizes public water systems for outstanding performance in 2007, as well as a Conservation Award.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Laurie

Burt awarded the winning systems with a certificate of outstanding performance and a Governor's Citation signed by Governor Deval Patrick.

Winning systems were determined based on their compliance with state drinking water regulations. The award winners had no monitoring enforcements or violations, submitted all required reports on time, adhered to good water management procedures and have excellent source protection standards. ♦



Concord Water staff display their awards and citation. From left are Environmental Analyst Matthew Mostoller, Conservation Coordinator Joanne Bissetta, Representative Cory Atkins, Water/Sewer Superintendent Alan Cathcart.

*Continued from front*

Expired or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications should be disposed of in the following manner:

- ♦ Keep the medicines in the original container. This will help identify the contents if they are accidentally ingested.
- ♦ Cross out your name and prescription number for safety.
- ♦ **For pills:** Add some water or soda to start dissolving them.  
**For liquids:** Add something inedible like cat litter, dirt or cayenne pepper.

- ♦ Close the lid and secure with duct or packing tape.
- ♦ Place the bottle(s) inside an opaque container like a coffee can or plastic laundry bottle and tape it closed.
- ♦ Hide the container in the trash. Do not put in the recycle bin.
- ♦ Do not put drugs in the trash without disguising them – human or animal scavengers may find them.

## MONEY-SAVING TIPS

### Get Your Rebate Now!

A limited number of double rebates are still available to Concord water customers who replace water guzzling toilets with water efficient models. Thanks to a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, up to \$250 per toilet will be rebated to customers installing a High-Efficiency Toilet. Replacing an older toilet with a conventional 1.6 gallon-per-flush model can net up to a \$100 rebate.

There are also a few \$100 clothes washer rebates still on hand. Toilets and clothes washers are the top two water-using appliances inside the home; replacing older models can result in lower water and energy bills. For both rebate programs, only certain models are eligible for rebates and funds are limited. Go to [www.concordma.gov](http://www.concordma.gov) or call (978) 318-3259 for more information.

### Use Your Water Meter to Track Use

A water meter measures the amount of water entering your home. Most water meters are located in basements near the wall closest to the street. They can also be in a utility closet, mechanical room or outside in a pit in the ground. In Concord, the meters measure water use in cubic feet (CF). One cubic foot equals 7.48 gallons.

Read your meter throughout the day or week to determine when a lot of water is being used.

Your water meter can also help you determine whether your water-using appliances and fixtures have “silent” leaks. To check for leaks, turn off all faucets and water-using items both inside and outdoors. Observe your meter. The little black or red triangle or the red needle that rotates are low-flow indicators, or “leak detectors” that sense very low amounts of water passing through the meter. You have a leak if the leak detector is moving. You may also want to jot down the meter reading numbers and check back 30 to 60 minutes later (don't use any water). If the second reading is higher, you probably have a leak.

Top culprits for leaks are toilets and irrigation systems. The American Water Works Association estimates that up to 25% of toilets in the US leak. These leaks range from several gallons to more than 100 gallons per day.

**Call CPW at (978) 318-3259 for a free toilet leak detection kit.**