

Action Items for Residents and Municipalities to Protect the Mystic River

Provided by the Mystic River Watershed Association

ANYTIME AND BEFORE A STORM

- Always pick up after your pet. Prevent pet waste from being washed into the river!
- Direct all outside drain spouts to send water into your lawn or garden where it can be absorbed – not into the driveway or onto the street.
- Maintain clean, well swept driveways and sidewalks to prevent debris from entering stormdrains.
- Remind residents and neighbors to clear nearby storm drains of debris.
- Dispose of paint, oil, and chemicals appropriately – do not dump down stormdrains.

DURING A STORM

While most sewer systems can function normally in good weather, stormwater resulting from heavy rainfall can cause sewage overflows that go into the Mystic River and its tributaries.

Here's what can be done to help prevent this problem:

- Minimize home (or business) water use during large rain events.
 - ✓ Minimize your shower time.
 - ✓ Only do laundry and dishwashing that can't wait for 48 hours.
 - ✓ Fewer flushes as possible.
 - ✓ Do not apply outdoor chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides before or during a storm – these can be washed into a nearby waterbody or stormdrain.
- Municipal Action:
 - ✓ If a Combined or Sanitary Sewer Overflow has occurred (either in your town/city or upstream), alert residents to avoid contact with river for 48 hours after the storm ends.
 - In such an alert, be specific about what pollutants are present (such as untreated human waste) and what the direct medical hazards are. It is important for people to have a clear understanding of any health risks.
 - These risks include: inflammation of the intestines; respiratory, eye, and ear infections; skin rashes; hepatitis; and other diseases.

AFTER A STORM

Residential Action:

- Urge municipal officials to create, and residents to support, development of green infrastructure to take pressure off of overworked municipal stormwater systems.
- Let municipal officials know that you are concerned about the health of the river.
- Plan a rain garden in your neighborhood and/or community or coordinate a rain barrel sale.
- Share your knowledge with others!

Municipal Action:

- Send an email alert from Municipal offices to residents about any resulting issues from the storm such as CSOs or flooding. Include mentions of any possible public health risks.
 - ✓ In the event of a Combined or Sanitary Sewer Overflow, post necessary information to the municipal website.
Cambridge has a great approach! The City of Cambridge sends out an email alert and posts to the news section of their website (www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/newsandevents/news.aspx)
 - ✓ Provide a map that locates all outflow locations. Consider having them marked by a sign that indicates they can be a BIO-HAZARD.
- Inform all residents about this issue by posting information on stormwater and stormwater management on municipal websites.
- Include information on enlightened stormwater management practices in any environmental flyers or newsletters issued by municipal agencies and authorities.