



# NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SUBJECT: Celebrate Pollution Prevention Week and help put our streams, rivers and lakes on a reduced-salt diet**

*Join Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District for a special hard hat tour of the district treatment plant Friday, Sept. 21*

**MADISON, WIS.** – Too much salt in our diets is a bad thing. Too much salt in our streams, rivers, lakes and groundwater is a really bad thing.

This year, during Pollution Prevention Week from Sept. 17-23, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District will highlight ways businesses and consumers can protect water and keep sewer bills low by reducing chloride and other pollutants. Meanwhile, the public is invited for a [special hard hat tour](#) on Friday, Sept. 21, from 2 to 4 p.m. to learn how the district cleans water and recycles resources.

“Simple steps can make a big difference in water quality and it’s far more cost effective to prevent pollution than to remove certain pollutants from the wastewater stream,” said Emily Jones, pollution prevention specialist. “This is particularly true with salt, since most sewage treatment plants are not designed to remove salt. By reducing the salt used in water softeners and on roads and sidewalks, individuals and businesses can help our community meet clean water goals.”

Already, area businesses including Hydrite Chemical, Best Western PLUS Inntowner, Barnes Inc. and UnityPoint Health Meriter have taken major steps to reduce salt use by hundreds to thousands of pounds per month. Leaders of the businesses, who have benefited from the district’s [chloride reduction grants](#), said the efforts are saving money and staff time in addition to benefiting the environment.

Other businesses, including dental clinics, are reducing other pollutants such as mercury, which can be effectively captured at the source. Consumers also have an important role to play.

Among the easiest steps:

- **Keep mercury, solvents and other harsh chemicals out of the water.** This year, the district is partnering with Dane County Clean Sweep to offer a voucher for free disposal of certain types of household hazardous waste, including mercury-containing products, solvents, gas and fuel blends, through Sept. 29. Visit [www.madsewer.org/pollutionprevention](http://www.madsewer.org/pollutionprevention) to download the voucher.

- **Use the trash can – not the toilet – for disposal of wipes, dental floss and rags.** Even wipes labeled “flushable” do not degrade and can cause costly clogs for homeowners and the district.
- **Check your water softener to ensure it’s working efficiently.** Nearly 60 percent of the salt that reaches the treatment plant comes from water softeners. If your home softener is using more than one bag of salt per month, call a softener service provider to get it evaluated.
- **Safely dispose of medications at a Safe Communities MedDrop collection box.** Find a list of collection boxes here: <https://safercommunity.net/meddrop/>.
- **Take the free hard hat tour of the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant on Friday.** The tour is for participants 12 years or older and will begin at the district’s Maintenance Facility, 1610 Moorland Road. Sign up here: <https://www.eventleaf.com/DistrictHardHatTour>.
- Visit [www.madsewer.org/pollutionprevention](http://www.madsewer.org/pollutionprevention) for a list of actions everyone can take to prevent pollution.

Throughout the week, check out special pollution prevention tips on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), @madmetrosewer.

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District’s operating permits depend on achieving water quality goals. To achieve these goals and keep rates low, the district works to prevent pollution through:

- The [Yahara Watershed Improvement Network](#), or Yahara WINS, a group dedicated to reducing phosphorus from farms and urban areas. The strategy is known as adaptive management.
- [Grants and rebates](#) that encourage businesses, apartments and other large scale water users to reduce chloride entering the wastewater stream through softened water. The district also participates in the [Wisconsin Salt Wise Partnership](#) to reduce municipal and residential use of salt on roads and sidewalks during winter.
- [Education and outreach](#) to improve conservation and understanding of the value of water.

#### **ABOUT THE DISTRICT**

Established in 1930 to protect the lakes and streams of the upper Yahara watershed, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District today serves 26 Madison area customer communities covering some 184 square miles and 360,000 people. The district owns and operates 141 miles of pipe and 18 regional pumping stations that convey approximately 41 million gallons of wastewater to the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant each day. Organized as a municipal corporation, the district is a leader in sustainability and resource reclamation; its rates are established by the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District Commission.