



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6632

allison.fore@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

For immediate release

August 19, 2014

MWRD unveils free rain barrel distribution program

Roofs comprise 41 percent of the impenetrable surface in Cook County, and many of these rooftops are directly connected to the public drainage system.

To minimize basement backups, combined sewer overflow volume, and flooding, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is introducing a new rain barrel distribution program that will offer free rain barrels to Cook County residents and organizations that meet certain qualifications. The MWRD will deliver free rain barrels through three distribution networks: municipalities; campus-type facilities; and non-government organizations, planning groups, or community groups.



MWRD Rain Barrel label

Municipalities must sign an intergovernmental agreement with the MWRD to participate. Once registered, the village or city can make barrels available to residents who meet certain requirements:

- The resident must have property that has downspouts that are directly connected to the sewer system;
- The homeowner must agree to disconnect all downspouts from the sewer system;
- The homeowner must place rain barrels on each downspout, where feasible.

Qualified residents should call their local municipalities to request rain barrels through the new program.

The MWRD will also provide free rain barrels to campus-type facilities that are committed to being a community partner and good steward of stormwater. These type of facilities include: schools, municipal properties (i.e. town halls, libraries, park district buildings, fire and police stations, garage/outbuildings), churches, community centers, senior centers, hospitals and clinics. The facility representative should request rain barrels by writing the MWRD and include the following information:

- Building name (if any)
- Building street address
- Delivery contact name and telephone number
- Estimated square footage of building
- Number of downspouts connected to the sewer
- Number of rain barrels requested
- Any other additional stormwater, green infrastructure controls on the site

(continued)

Our Water Environment: **Take it personally**

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

MWRD unveils free rain barrel distribution program (continued)

Non-government organizations, planning groups, or community groups throughout Cook County will also have access to the MWRD's Rain Barrel Program for well thought out regional plans. These entities will need to submit a detailed plan and assure that there will be proper installation, education, care and maintenance of the barrels. The proposal should include a general overview of the project and indicate the exact number and addresses where rain barrels will be installed. The organization must also submit a post-implementation plan or "As-Built" document that provides:

- Number and addresses of where rain barrels were installed;
- Description of other green infrastructure controls implemented; and,
- A brief report of their project successes and/or lessons learned.

"We believe the new program is a win-win for everyone," said Commissioner Michael Alvarez, chairman of the MWRD's Stormwater Management Committee. "By disconnecting roof connections from the sewer system, we should see a major reduction in basement backups, combined sewer overflow volume, and overall water in our system."

Additional information about the new rain barrel program can be obtained by calling (312) 751-6633 or applications may be submitted to: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, Office of Public Affairs, 100 E. Erie St., Chicago, IL 60611.

For those who do not qualify for the free barrels, the MWRD will continue to sell and deliver them for \$58 plus tax via www.mwrdd.org.

###

Our Water Environment: **Take it personally**

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