

Oil and Water Don't Mix

Help keep holiday grease out of the sewer system.

Pouring cooking grease down the drain is the number one cause of sewage spills, because it can damage your sewer line, as well as the District's sewer system and wastewater pumping stations.



With all of the extra cooking that comes with the holidays, MNWD usually sees an increase in the number of problems within the sewer system. As you prepare those turkeys, hams and roasts, here are a few tips to keep excess holiday cooking grease out of the pipes:

- Never pour grease down the drain, toilet or garbage disposal.
- Pour cooking grease into a can and refrigerate or freeze it until it is solid, then dispose of it in a trash can.
- Always wipe excess grease from pots, pans, dishes and utensils with a paper towel before washing.

These simple steps will help to keep excess holiday cooking grease out of the pipes and help prevent sewage spills.

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For meeting dates and agendas, visit www.MNWD.com.

WaterLines is a monthly publication to keep water users in the Moulton Niguel Water District informed about water-related issues and events. Please send any comments or suggestions to MNWD, 27500 La Paz Road, Laguna Niguel, CA, 92677, or call us at (949) 831-2500. www.MNWD.com.

Level 2 "Water Alert" Irrigation Schedule

Residential

Aliso Viejo and Mission Viejo
Monday and Thursday, and Saturday or Sunday

Dana Point, Laguna Hills and Laguna Niguel
Tuesday and Friday, and Saturday or Sunday

Commercial

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

MNWD's Water Conservation Program prohibits watering between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Recycled water users are exempt from this schedule.

**Conserve Today: Save Water. Save Money.
Protect the Environment.**

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www.MNWD.com

Board Studies Methods to Encourage Efficiency

Every MNWD customer has unique water needs. Typically, more water is used in large homes than condominiums and apartments, and some businesses need more than others. That is why the District is evaluating the way we calculate water rates, and looking at new approaches to bring our customers more fairness and equity, as we encourage everyone to use water more efficiently.



The proposed Water-Budget-Based Rate Structure would mean the end of current three-day-per-week watering restrictions.

The MNWD Board of Directors is continuing to study a potential move from the current water rate model to a Water-Budget-Based Rate Structure. This proposed structure would allow District customers to become a more active part of the solution as we work together to conserve our region's limited water resources, and it would provide customers more freedom to use water as they see fit. Any potential change in rate structure is still months away, and would include several opportunities for customers to participate in the process before a decision is made in a public hearing. Customers will hear from the District several times in the coming months as the study continues, but we first want to answer the question, "What are Water-Budget-Based Rates?"

Water-Budget-Based Rate Structure

The Water-Budget-Based Rate Structure would help customers achieve greater efficiency by providing a personalized amount of water – a water budget – to meet each customer's specific needs. This amount would be calculated for residential customers based on a survey MNWD is conducting of each customer's lot size, landscaped area, the number of residents in each home and localized weather data, among other factors. Businesses, however, use water in a different manner from homes, so their budgets would be calculated based on a three-year rolling average of each commercial customers' monthly use.

Customers whose water use remains within their water budgets would be billed at the lowest rates; customers who exceed their budgets would be billed at higher rates. This new rate structure would reward efficiency and give customers the freedom to use their water budgets as they see fit. The Board of Directors would also give consideration to eliminating the current three-day-per-week watering restrictions. Please look for more information in the near future, or call us with questions at (949) 831-2500.

Water Efficiency Update

Since July, MNWD customers have conserved

14.2%

We are **required** to conserve

20%

Are you using more than you need?

Water Conservation Tip of the Month

Reduce your winter watering. Plants go dormant in fall and winter and require 40 to 70 percent less water than during summer months.

Visit www.MNWD.com or call (949) 831-2500 to learn other easy ways to save.

AAA Bond Rating to Save Customers Millions

MNWD's bond rating was recently increased to AAA by Fitch Ratings, which makes the District one of few water agencies in the nation to achieve the industry's highest available designation. The rating will save MNWD customers millions of dollars in the coming years by enabling the District to finance capital projects at lower interest rates.

The rating reflects MNWD's prudent stewardship of public funds. The District has been able to maintain a strong financial performance despite the increased cost of imported water and the decrease in revenue from property taxes. Fitch also recognized MNWD's efforts to improve local water-supply reliability and storage capacity. The new rating will allow MNWD to refinance debt associated with those current projects as well, at a major cost savings for customers.



Upper Chiquita Reservoir

Helping to Improve the Lives of Others

This holiday season, MNWD employees are taking part in a program to deliver not only water, but hope and cheer year-round to those who need it most. Many District staff members have recently joined the City of Hope's Employee Giving Program, and will have a donation automatically deducted from their paycheck each month to support cancer research, education and improving patient care. The District's Philanthropy Committee chose the City of Hope in honor of a District employee who is currently battling colon cancer.

City of Hope is one of only 40 comprehensive cancer centers in the nation and is a leader in the fight to cure cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDs and other life-threatening diseases. The charity offers employee giving for public organizations and private companies, and has raised more than one million dollars through its Employee Giving Program since it was created in 2005. For information on how you can support the program, please visit www.CityofHope.org.



History on Display at District Headquarters



For the past three months, we've been sharing our 50-year history with you in *Waterlines* and on our website. Now, we're bringing this history to life through a series of displays at the District's main office. Large, framed posters with photographs and stories from our archives are currently viewable in our lobby as part of our 50th anniversary celebration. The posters will soon be touring local city halls and libraries before being placed on permanent display in the District's boardroom later this year.

MNWD's Billing Department Puts Customers First

Whether you have a question about your bill or need help with electronic payment, the MNWD billing department is always available to assist you. The billing department is responsible for processing payments, reviewing bills for accuracy and customer service associated with the 52,000 bills the District sends out each month. The seven accounting professionals of the billing department know their numbers, but they also work very closely with customers to solve problems and prevent service shut-offs, saving the District time and money while keeping your water flowing.

For our customers' convenience, MNWD offers a number of easy ways to pay your water bill, including check or cash, auto pay from a checking or savings account, online banking through your bank's website, credit card payments through a third party, and the e.Bill program accessible on the District's website. Approximately 20 percent of MNWD customers are enrolled in electronic billing options, and more are making the switch every day. These options allow customers to forego paper statements, saving time, paper and the need for a stamp in making their payments.

No matter how you choose to pay your bill, MNWD's billing department is here and ready to assist you. Just stop by, log on or call (949) 448-4050.

California-Friendly Plant of the Month:

Texas Ranger

The Texas Ranger (*Leucophyllum*) goes by many names: purple sage, Texas sage, silverleaf, white sage, ash bush and barometer bush. But despite its many sage-related names, Texas sage is not related to sage plants at all. *Leucophyllum* are native to Texas and Mexico, and are best known for their ability to predict the rain. High humidity sends a blanket of purple flowers over the plant, telling you when it will rain, or giving you a welcome sight once the rains stop.



Texas Ranger thrives in desert heat and low-quality, sandy soil. Well-drained soil is important to the plant, and it does best when it is not pruned, as that can reduce flowering. Use Texas Ranger as a hedge or on its own as a shrub. Give the plant a good drink every few weeks in the summer, otherwise, let the rains do the watering and watch the flowers bloom.

Texas Ranger *Leucophyllum*

Season:	Year-round
Size:	6-8 feet
Color:	Silver-gray leaves, fuchsia flowers
Water:	Low
Sun:	Full sun