

TOWN OF SHARON

WATER QUALITY REPORT

FOR 2020

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

To Our Customers,

As we slowly return to some version of normal following more than a year of sudden and dramatic changes to our daily routines wrought by the coronavirus and political change, I suspect you again have not had too much opportunity to pay attention to your municipal water service. However, know that during this whole period, Sharon Water Department and Public Works personnel, like the far more recognized staff of the Police and Fire Departments, have been at work every day of the quarantine. Maintaining water service is essential to public health and safety. Protecting the health of our customers and workforce is our highest priority. As a result, the water kept flowing and other essential Water Department and DPW services were provided uninterrupted through this unprecedented situation.

All operations related to drinking water treatment continue normally. Customers can be assured that their drinking water was determined by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to be safe for consumption. With this understanding, the most important take away from this Annual Water Quality Report is that the drinking water in Sharon continues to meet or surpass all State and Federal drinking water quality standards.

Consequently, I am pleased to present you with this year's Annual Water Quality Report, providing you with information on where your water comes from, what we are doing to modernize our system, what is found in the water, what we do to ensure high-quality water now and in the future, and tips on efficient use of water.

The Sharon Water Department (Public Water Supply No. 4266000) recognizes that the single most important aspect of our job is to deliver high quality water for public health to the residents of Sharon. As a result, the most significant components of this effort are protection of the natural resources that contribute to your water supply and modernization of the distribution network that conveys this water to you.

We remain committed to protection of the areas around our water supplies. Most Town residents remain unaware that the Water Department is the sixth largest individual landowner in the Town behind only, in order of total land ownership, the Conservation Commission, the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Town of Sharon (which includes School Department property) and the Trustees of Reservations. The Conservation Commission and the Massachusetts Audubon Society, combined, own about a quarter of the land in Sharon. In fact, with the purchase of Rattlesnake Hill, over 75% of the Town is tax-exempt protected open space.

More challenges are on the horizon. Drought conditions, like those experienced across the Commonwealth last year, can reduce water availability while demand for nonessential outdoor water use soars. More stringent regulatory limits on water withdrawals during droughts are anticipated, which make it likely that mandatory lawn watering restrictions will become more common, if not the norm. In addition, our staff continue to work tirelessly to remain well-informed of ever-evolving regulations that pertain to existing and emerging contaminants, most notably PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). As we enter these uncharted waters, your ongoing support is truly invaluable.

At a time where increased connectivity and a never ending "breaking news" cycle is bringing us to the brink of information overload, it is increasingly difficult to find time to focus on anything that is not hyped as imminent. For those of you who have the time and interest to digest the information in this report, congratulations, and happy reading! For those without the time at this instance, know that you can always access this report at a later time on the Town of Sharon Website. As always, if you have any questions on any of the information provided within this report, please feel free to call our office at 781-784-1525.

Respectfully,

Eric R. Hooper, P.E.
Superintendent of Public Works

2021 PROPOSED PROJECTS

Most large construction projects statewide were put on hold, delayed or proceeded slower than planned during the COVID-19 quarantine. Sharon projects were no exception. Water main replacement in the Heights area originally scheduled for 2020 was completed during the Spring of 2021, while water main replacement in the Railroad Parking lot neighborhood is now scheduled to resume after a multi-year hiatus.

Work was able to continue on the three significant system improvements currently on-going: replacement of the water storage tank off Massapoag Avenue, construction of an emergency pump station connection to the MWRA via Norwood at the town line at Tiot Street, and installation of a bypass main under Tiot Street and up Edgehill Road to Norwood Street. Completion of this project is vital for emergency supply purposes and tentatively scheduled for completion by the Fall of 2021.

Water meter replacement is also currently progressing with a selection of a fixed network, cellular-based system to replace our current meter stock that is beginning to fail which is resulting in increasing estimated reads that have created uncertainty among customers regarding water use. Installation should begin during the Summer of 2021.

SHARON'S WATER SYSTEM Our water system includes six groundwater supply wells and pumping stations, four water storage tanks, and approximately 120 miles of water main. Our groundwater sources are of good quality and require minimal treatment. Our water is disinfected and treated for corrosion control to reduce the amounts of lead and copper in our water. Fluoride is added to our water to promote strong teeth and prevent tooth decay/cavities.

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION Sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.

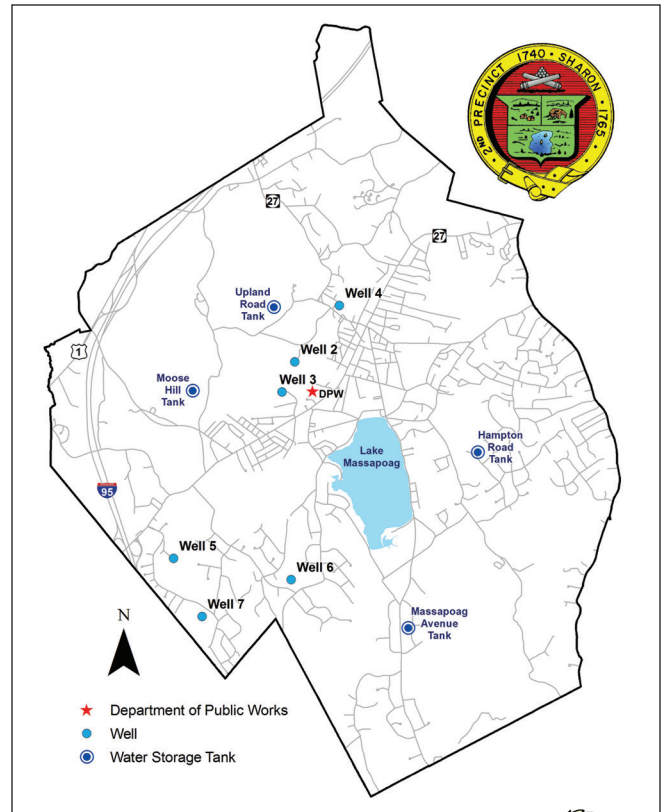
Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, can be naturally-occurring or result from urban storm water runoff, industrial, or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, and farming.

Pesticides and herbicides may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and residential uses.

Organic chemical contaminants include synthetic and volatile organic chemicals that are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems.

Radioactive contaminants can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production, and mining activities.

QUALITY CONTROL To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the Department and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contamination. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791.)



HELP TO PROTECT OUR WATER SUPPLY!

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has prepared a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) Report for our water supply sources. The SWAP report assesses the susceptibility of public water supplies. A copy of the SWAP report is available at the Department of Public Works office. Our SWAP report has indicated that our groundwater is highly susceptible to contamination from residential activities adjacent to the wells; residential land uses; accidental spills from local roadways, Route 95 and the railroad; hazardous materials storage; existing contamination sites; and agricultural activities.

As a consumer, you have an impact on the quality of our water supply sources, and therefore, the quality of the water you drink. The land around our groundwater wells is mainly forested and residential with fewer amounts zoned as commercial. When rain falls or snow melts, the seemingly small amounts of chemicals and other pollutants around your property may be transferred by groundwater or overland flows to the wells.

DRINKING WATER AND PEOPLE WITH WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEMS

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly people, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

CROSS CONNECTIONS

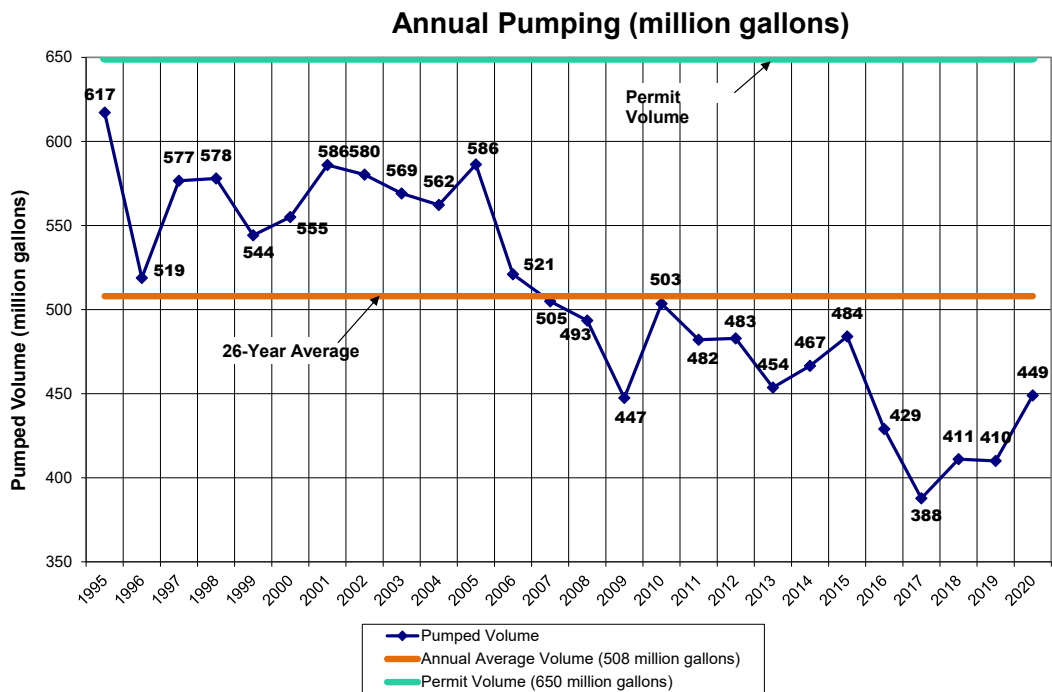
A cross connection is a connection between a drinking water pipe and a polluted source. The pollution can come from your own home. For instance, you're going to spray fertilizer on your lawn. You hook up your hose to the sprayer that contains the fertilizer. If the water pressure drops (say because of fire hydrant use in the town) when the hose is connected to the fertilizer, the fertilizer may be sucked back into the drinking water pipes through the hose. Using an attachment on your hose called a backflow prevention device can prevent this problem. The Sharon Water Department

recommends the installation of backflow prevention devices, such as a low-cost hose-bib vacuum breaker, for all inside and outside hose connections. You can purchase this at a hardware store or plumbing supply store. This is a great way for you to help protect the water in your home as well as the drinking water system in your town. For additional information on cross connections and on the status of your water system's cross connection program, please contact Eric Hooper at the Sharon Department of Public Works at 781-784-1525.

WATER USAGE

The annual pumping graph shows the total volume of water pumped from the Town's six groundwater supply wells for each year from 1995 through 2020. The six wells are used to supply drinking water to meet the demands of the Town's water customers. The Town is permitted by the State to pump no more than 650 million gallons of water each year. During the 26-year period, the annual average volume of water pumped was 508 million gallons, 142 million gallons below the permitted volume. From 1995 through 2006, the pumped volume was above the 26-year average. However, since 2007, due in part to incrementally more restrictive outdoor water use regulations and diligent efforts by the Water Department to prevent or locate and repair leaks, the pumped volume has been below the 26-year average. In 2020, our volume of water pumped was 449 million gallons. We suspect the increase in water use may be due to many customers working from home in 2020.

Efficient water use helps to conserve our water supplies. Find out about your own water usage. Divide the number of gallons you consumed on your water bill by the number of days since your prior bill. Then divide by the number of people living in your home. Your gallons per capita daily (gpcd) water use should not exceed 65 gpcd. Lower use means lower water bills.



WATER QUALITY SUMMARY Listed below are 12 contaminants detected in Sharon’s drinking water in 2020. Not listed are over 100 other contaminants for which we tested but did not detect. The complete list of contaminants that we test for is available at the Department of Public Works office and at the Sharon Public Library.

SAMPLES COLLECTED FROM OUR WATER SUPPLY

Substance (Contaminant)	Units	Highest Level Detected	Range of Detection	Highest Level Allowed (EPA’s MCLs)	Ideal Goals (EPA’s MCLGs)	Sources of Contaminant
PRIMARY CHEMICALS						
Fluoride ¹	ppm	0.84	0.63 - 0.84	4	4	Water additive which promotes strong teeth
Nitrate	ppm	5.67	0.87 - 5.67	10	10	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks
Perchlorate ²	ppb	0.34	0.07 - 0.34	2.0	N/A	Oxygen additive in solid fuel propellant for rockets, missiles, and fireworks
SECONDARY CHEMICAL						
Manganese ³	ppb	50(Avg)	ND - 229	NR	NR	Erosion of natural deposits
UNREGULATED CHEMICALS⁴						
Chlorodibromomethane	ppb	3.2	ND - 3.2	NR	NR	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Haloacetic Acids (HAA9)	ppb	3.0(Avg)	2.5 - 3.6	NR	NR	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Sodium ⁵	ppm	66.9(Avg)	21.3 - 110	NR	NR	Discharge from the use and improper storage of sodium-containing de-icing compounds or in water-softening agents

SAMPLES COLLECTED FROM YOUR FAUCETS

Substance (Contaminant)	Units	Highest Running Annual Average	Range of Detection	Highest Level Allowed (EPA’s MCLs)	Ideal Goals (EPA’s MCLGs)	Sources of Contaminant
PRIMARY CHEMICALS						
Total Trihalomethanes	ppb	17.6 (SITE 4)	2.9 - 23.0	80	N/A	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5)	ppb	3.3 (SITE 4)	ND - 8.7	60	N/A	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Chlorine	ppm	0.41	0.07 - 1.10	4 (MRDL)	4 (MRDLG)	Water additive used to control microbes
	Units	90th Percentile	Range of Detection	Action Level (EPA’s MCLs)	Ideal Goals (EPA’s MCLGs)	
Copper ⁶	ppm	0.08	0 - 0.19	1.3	1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems (0 samples exceeded the action level)
Lead ⁶	ppb	6.0	0 - 48	15	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems (1 sample exceeded the action level)

DEFINITIONS

Maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG) – The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

Maximum contaminant level (MCL) – The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

Maximum Residual Disinfection Level (MRDL) – The highest level of disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of disinfectants is necessary for control of microbial contaminants (ex. chlorine, chloramines, chlorine dioxide).

Maximum Residual Disinfection Level Goal (MRDLG) – The level of drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

Action Level – The concentration of a contaminant, which, if exceeded, triggers a treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow. The action level for lead and copper is the 90th percentile of all samples taken at one time.

ND – Substance not detected in the sample. **ppm** – One part per million; one part per million is equivalent to \$1 in \$1,000,000.

NR – Not regulated. **ppb** – One part per billion; one part per billion is equivalent to \$1 in \$1,000,000,000.

Notes:

¹ Fluoride occurs naturally in all water supplies in trace amounts. Fluoride is added to the Sharon water supply to adjust the fluoride level to about one ppm so that it is optimal for better oral health. At this level, it is safe, odorless, colorless, and tasteless. Fluoride has a secondary maximum contaminant level (SMCL) of 2 ppm to better protect human health.

² Massachusetts has set a maximum contaminant level of 2.0 ppb for perchlorate.

³ US EPA and DEP have established public health advisory levels (HAL) for manganese to protect against concerns of potential neurological effects and a one-day HAL of 1,000 ppb for acute exposure.

⁴ Unregulated contaminants are those for which the EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated contaminant monitoring is to assist EPA in determining their occurrence in drinking water and whether future regulations are warranted.

⁵ The Massachusetts Office of Research and Standards has set a guideline concentration of 20 ppm for sodium. Some people who drink water containing sodium at high concentrations for many years could experience an increase in blood pressure.

⁶ Lead and copper compliance is based on the 90th percentile value, which is the highest level found in 9 out of every 10 homes sampled. This number is compared to the action level for each contaminant. The 90th percentile for lead and copper did not exceed the action level. The state allows us to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently. Some of our data, though representative, are more than one year old. Samples for lead and copper were taken in 2018.

LEAD If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The Sharon Department of Public Works is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

NITRATE in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. If you are caring for an infant, you should ask for advice from your health care provider.

TOGETHER, WE CAN CONSERVE WATER...

The Sharon Water Department is committed to water conservation and has partnered with the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA) to manage a Water Conservation Program. Rebate programs, outreach, and education help to inspire residential water efficiency, which saves money and energy, improves the town's ecosystem and maintains water independence.



Rebate Program

Toilets

Residents are eligible for a rebate for half the cost of a toilet, up to \$200. The toilet being installed must be a WaterSense labeled model of 1.28 GPF or less.

Toilets must be installed by a licensed plumber and be inspected by the Sharon plumbing inspector. Rebates for existing homes only, not new construction.



Clothes Washers

Get \$200 for installation of a clothes washer with an Energy Star water factor of 4.0 or less. Look for efficient clothes washers at energystar.gov

Rebate terms & conditions apply. Please call the Water Department at 781-784-1525 x2315, prior to purchase, to confirm eligibility. More info. can be found at sharonwater.com

In 2020, 23 toilet rebates and 35 clothes washer rebates were distributed.

Free Water Efficient Showerheads and Faucet Aerators

WaterSense labeled showerheads and faucet aerators are available to Sharon residents at the Water Department during regular business hours.



In 2020, 2 showerheads and 6 faucet aerators were requested by residents.

Watersmart Software Program



The Water Department continues to offer free WaterSmart Software to residents to help with water conservation efforts.

Using the portal, residents can:

- see exactly where home water use occurs, in gallons per day,
- use an interactive, customized recommendation library,
- check on water use at any time.

WaterSmart does not replace quarterly water bills and is not a mandatory requirement. Sharon residents can register for WaterSmart software at sharonwater.com

Drought Tolerant Grass Seed Program

The Water Department offered drought-tolerant fescue grass seed to Sharon residents at \$30 per 25lb bag with a two bag limit per household.

In 2020, the Water Department sold 160 bags of grass seed.

Fescue grasses are insect resistant and will survive in sunny or shady areas. They require less water and fertilizer than other grass types and are slow-growing, which means less mowing.

School Program

The COVID-19 pandemic required a different approach to the Sharon Water Education Program since most of the school year took place remotely. Fortunately, NepRWA staff was able to convert their program to a virtual model and managed to visit with all of the 5th-grade students in the district.



Approximately 300 students were taught about the town's water resources, water infrastructure, water conservation, and stormwater pollution. The program was presented via PowerPoint over the Zoom platform.

Follow-up materials were emailed to all of the teachers and students were encouraged to share the information with their families and friends.

Media

Water conservation newsletters were produced quarterly for residential water bills, and a town-specific water conservation website sharonwater.com continues to be updated as needed.

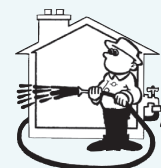
An educational brochure about reducing polluted stormwater runoff was mailed to all residents and businesses in June.

Standard Annual Outdoor Water Restriction: May 1–Oct. 1

Water use, much like electricity, has peak hours that stress the system. Sharon's water use restrictions allow water tanks to refill after peak morning demand, ensuring fire fighting capability, and lessening environmental impact.

Lawn sprinklers, either underground or hose fed, must adhere to the following odd/even schedule:

- Odd Numbered Homes–Mon. & Thurs.–**6pm to 8pm only**
- Even Numbered Homes–Tues. & Fri.–**6pm to 8pm only**
- Residents may use one hand-held hose, **fitted with a spray nozzle**, without restriction.



...AND REDUCE STORMWATER POLLUTION.

Stormwater pollution occurs when rain and snowmelt flow over impervious surfaces, like paved streets, parking lots, and rooftops, and does not percolate into the ground.

The “runoff” picks up fertilizer, motor oil, pet waste, and other contaminants and flows into storm drains, which then discharge the untreated, polluted water into our local waterways.

Regional Stormwater Partner

The Sharon Water Department is a member of the **Neponset Stormwater Partnership (NSP)**, a regional program managed by the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA).



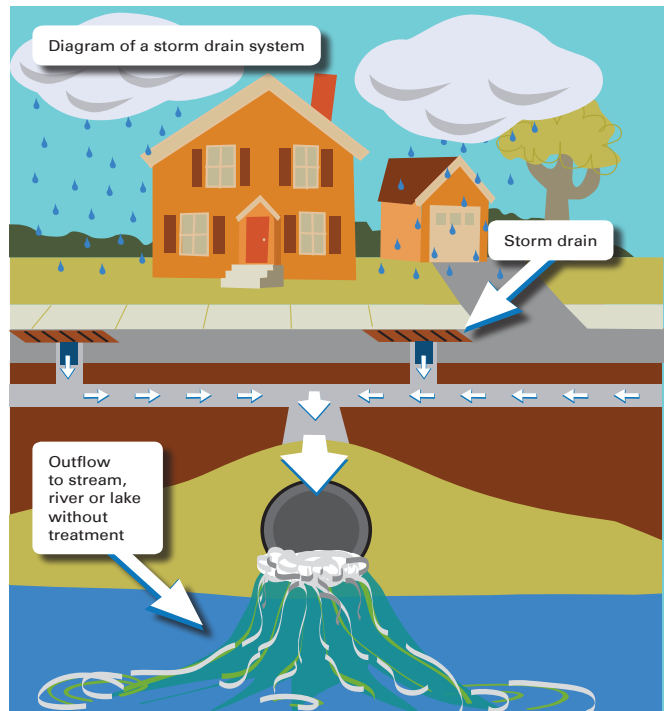
The Partnership aims to reduce the cost and increase the effectiveness of stormwater management programs through collaborative projects and resource sharing. Outreach to the community is implemented through newsletters, mailers, and public school programs.

Polluted stormwater runoff creates an unhealthy situation for recreation and wildlife—and can impact our drinking water quality!

Please take these steps around your home and business to help prevent polluted stormwater runoff in Sharon.

- Keep storm drains clear of leaves and yard waste.
- Use organic fertilizers and pesticides, and never use more than what is recommended on the package. Sweep up all spills.
- Redirect downspouts away from pavement and onto grassy areas, where runoff from your roof can soak into the ground.
- Use pervious materials in landscape designs, such as bricks, pavers, and stones, which allow water to flow into the ground.
- Plant rain gardens to help filter and soak up water.
- Make sure that sprinklers and irrigation heads are watering lawns and gardens—not sidewalks, driveways, or the street.
- Wash your car near the lawn. Let soap run off into the grass, rather than down the street and into a storm drain.
- Store hazardous materials properly and dispose of them through the local Household Hazardous Waste Program.
- Never dump anything down the storm drain.

Learn more at YourCleanWater.org



Pick Up After Your Dog

Dog waste pollutes our water and makes us sick. Unlike other contaminants, such as fertilizer and motor oil, dog waste carries parasites and bacteria, which can be transmitted to humans and make them sick.



When dog waste decomposes, it releases nutrients that cause excessive growth of algae and weeds—and is a major contributor to local water pollution.

Please be a responsible pet owner and neighbor.

Always pick up your dog’s waste and dispose of it in a trash can!



No pets allowed on Sharon beaches at any time!

To protect the water of Lake Massapoag from contamination, the Sharon Board of Health prohibits dogs, horses, and other pets from Veteran’s Memorial Beach and the Community Center Beach.

Dogs may walk on the designated path on Memorial Beach from **Oct. 15th to April 15th** but must be kept on a leash at all times.

Persons walking dogs must carry a device to remove and dispose of dog waste in a trash can.



Town of Sharon
Department of Public Works
OFFICIAL NOTICE

PRESORTED STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
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SHARON, MA
PERMIT NO. 13

POSTAL PATRON
SHARON, MA 02067

A close-up photograph of water splashing from a faucet, with droplets captured in mid-air against a dark background. The water is illuminated, creating a shimmering effect.

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