



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD's DUMP Hotline answers 23 years of calls, reduces water contamination

Even after the Clean Water Act was implemented in 1972, companies, businesses and some individuals continued to dump toxic waste into area waterways and sewers, rarely facing consequences or penalties.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) recognized that through public participation, violators could be stopped. In 1989, the MWRD instituted a 24 hour 1-800-332-DUMP hotline, and since then, thousands of calls have been received and investigated.

"The hotline has definitely reduced contamination in the waterways, saved fish and wildlife, and limited damage to the biological processes of our wastewater treatment facilities," said Commissioner Frank Avila, Chairman of the MWRD Industrial Waste & Water Pollution Committee. "Whether the release is deliberate or accidental, the hotline makes it easy for the public to anonymously report instances of water pollution."

MWRD systems dispatchers monitor the hotline from the MWRD control room in Chicago. If a caller is reporting a dump or spill into a sewer or into a Chicago area waterway, the dispatcher refers the call to the MWRD's Industrial Waste Division and a pollution control officer immediately launches an investigation.

The officers strive to complete their investigation within five business days. Some cases may be open longer due to the nature of the event and the involvement of other agencies. Depending upon the circumstances, services may be needed from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or the U.S. Coast Guard.

The hotline also receives calls that are unrelated to illegal dumping. These calls are transferred to the appropriate contact within the MWRD for follow-up action.

"The MWRD's pollution control officers have greatly reduced occurrences of dumping and have worked hard to assure that chemical wastes are disposed of in an environmentally-responsible way and in compliance with federal, state and local laws," said Commissioner Avila.

Our water environment, Take it personally.

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