American Water Newsroom

New Jersey American Water Reminds Customers to Practice Good Water and Wastewater Habits this Holiday Season

CAMDEN, N.J. – NOV. 25, 2024 – With the holiday season in full swing, New Jersey American Water reminds customers to practice proper habits for disposing of fats, oils, and grease (FOGs) and conserving water, especially during the ongoing drought conditions in New Jersey. Small changes in your kitchen and around the house can go a long way in protecting your home's plumbing, infrastructure, and the state's limited water resources.

When washed down the sink, FOGs turn into thick sludge as they cool and stick to pipe interiors at the lower parts of the drain. Neither dishwashing detergents nor garbage disposals have the ability to properly break down these materials, which build up over time. Eventually, this sludge can cause sewer blockages, backups, and overflows, which pose potential health and environmental hazards.

Additionally, the state of New Jersey is under an active Drought Warning, and New Jersey American Water's Mandatory Conservation Notice is still in effect for all customers. It is equally important for customers to find ways to reduce their water usage as it is to dispose of FOGs properly during this season of increased cooking, cleaning, and hosting guests.

"As we head into the holiday season, it's important to remember that our water and wastewater habits can have a big impact, for better or worse," said Ben Morris, Vice President of Operations for New Jersey American Water. "Whether you're hosting holiday festivities or traveling to New Jersey to celebrate, practicing smart water habits and proper FOG disposal this holiday season will help us all protect our plumbing, our environment, and our most precious resource—water," said Morris.

New Jersey American Water provides the following FOG disposal and conservation tips for the holiday season:

Proper FOG Disposal:

- The answer is not at your disposal. No matter how powerful your garbage disposal may be, it can't prevent FOGs from sticking to your pipes. Never rinse FOGs down the drain.
- Strain it, don't drain it. To keep food scraps out of pipes, install a basket or strainer in the drain and empty the trapped pieces into the trash.
- Let's talk trash. Scrape all food scraps and FOGs from plates, pots, and utensils into the trash before washing.

For more information regarding wastewater tips and treatment, view the infographics on New Jersey American Water's website, and the FOG disposal video on the company's YouTube channel. A printable poster with proper FOG disposal tips for restaurants and businesses can also be found on the company's website here.

Holiday Water Conservation:

- Turn off the tap. Don't let water run while washing dishes, cleaning vegetables, brushing your teeth, or shaving.
- Run dishwashers and clothes washers only when full. If you have a water-saver cycle, use it.
- Fix leaks promptly. Even a slow drip can waste gallons of water daily. For help, download New Jersey American Water's Leak Detection Kit at newjerseyamwater.com under Water Information.
- Take shorter showers. Try to shower in five minutes or less, and don't let holiday houseguests hog the water.
- Sweep, don't spray. Use a broom or rake, instead of a hose, to sweep away leaves, acorns, or debris on pavement.
- Insulate exposed water pipes with pre-slit foam insulation to maintain warmth and avoid wasting water while it heats up.
- Share these tips with guests. Encourage family and friends to adopt water-saving habits during their stay.

New Jersey American Water customers can monitor their water usage and find ways to use water more wisely online through their MyWater account. More indoor and outdoor water-saving tips can be found on New Jersey American Water's website at newjerseyamwater.com/conservation and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Water Conservation Website.

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