

DRIIPS Communications Toolkit

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District

NEEA26 PUBLIC INFORMATION & EDUCATION



National Environmental
Achievement
AWARDS

- DRIIPS = Disconnect and Reduce Inflow and Infiltration to Private Sewers
- I&I reduction education toolkit for customer communities
 - Print and digital materials
 - Non-utility branding
- Promotes responsible infrastructure management to ratepayers
- Helps address a looming capacity issue for a rapidly growing area

Private Sewer Laterals

Lateral inspection
Inspect your sewer lateral occasionally for common concerns. A plumber can inspect your lateral for pipe material, condition, blockages or root growth, and pipe. Early detection helps save time and money from serious lateral damage, sinkholes and more. And, you'll help minimize the impacts of inflow and infiltration.

Pipes with cracks or breaks

Root intrusion

Blockages or clogs in the pipes

Sewer cleanout
Service providers clean clogs or blockages in laterals via the sewer cleanout, a capped pipe that provides easy access to the lateral. Ensure your cleanout is sealed to avoid waste from leaking out and to minimize clear water and debris from entering the system.

I&I PUTS CLEAR WATER IN SEWERS

Inflow

Infiltration

DRIIPS

INFLOW AND INFILTRATION (I&I)
Keep clear water out of sewers
Inflow and infiltration (I&I) is clear water, from rain or groundwater, that enters the wastewater system from cracks and holes in public and private sewers.
Each day, six million gallons of I&I enters the sanitary sewer system and is treated unnecessarily.

Sources of I&I

- A Sump pump
- B Gutter
- C Cracked lateral
- D Cleanout
- E Roots
- F Sewer lids

DRIIPS
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DRIIPS
Disconnect and Reduce Inflow and Infiltration to Private Sewers

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Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District



Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, Wisconsin *District I&I reduction educational communications program is a model for regional collaboration*

Every day, six million gallons of clear water enter the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District's sanitary sewer system through inflow and infiltration (I&I) vulnerabilities. That's three billion gallons annually treated unnecessarily, driving up costs, straining infrastructure capacity, and increasing risks of sanitary sewer backups and overflows during rain events.

Embarking on an I&I reduction educational program helps address a looming capacity problem across the regional system. The program, called DRIIPS, or Disconnect and Reduce Inflow and Infiltration to Private Sewers, relies on partnering with the District's 24 customer communities on educational communication and outreach efforts.

The program began following extreme rainstorms in south-central Wisconsin in Summer 2018 that caused basement backups and sanitary sewer overflows and highlighted the need for inflow and infiltration (I&I) reduction. At a community meeting in 2019, the District's customer communities identified I&I as a top priority. Led by engineer Jen Hurlebaus, the District formed a technical advisory committee to shape strategies and identify gaps in public outreach. Over the course of 22 meetings, the group helped align initiatives with local community needs. In 2023, communications staff Amanda Wegner and Amy Steger joined the effort to create a brand framework and public education campaign. They developed a DRIIPS Communications Toolkit in 2025, providing communities with a suite of materials to educate residents and businesses about reducing clear water in sanitary sewers.





The DRIIPS program blends technical support, public education, and local action into a comprehensive strategy. At its core is the DRIIPS Communications Toolkit, which offers flyers, billing inserts, social media content, newsletter templates, and graphics on sewer lateral maintenance, sump pump setup, stormwater connections, and I&I reduction.

Multi-channel outreach, including emails, social posts, and community meetings, helped raise awareness of the program within customer communities. Within a month of launching the DRIIPS Communications Toolkit, more than half of the District's communities started using its materials to educate residents and reduce I&I.

While more data is needed to measure long-term I&I reductions, DRIIPS is already transforming regional mindsets. It is reframing the issue from one of a local burden to one of shared regional responsibility toward a common goal. Through DRIIPS, the District has a replicable model for regional collaboration, utility leadership, and infrastructure management.

