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Water Department Tips Following Snow Storms

January 21, 2016—The Philadelphia Water Department is asking citizens around Philadelphia to assist us after the major snow storm we are expecting this coming weekend. Major snow events with high accumulation totals present risks many people may not be aware of, and we ask for your assistance in making sure that we can be ahead of any potential problems.

First, we ask that when you are shoveling, you do not pile snow on top of an inlet. Instead, we ask that you assist us by making sure inlets are cleared off. You want melting snow to be able to enter the inlets, rather than melt, and possibly create a flooding concern because the snow is blocking the water from going down the inlets. With the weather outlook of temperatures in the 40's in the days following the storm, this will be increasingly important as flooding concerns are high when large volumes of snow melt quickly and cannot enter our system to be carried off of the roads.

Second, fire hydrants are essential to public safety, and while they may be bright orange, snow drifts, or people shoveling may at times bury these hydrants and they may not be easily visible. In the event of a fire and the Fire Department responding, you want to make sure that they are fully visible and easily accessible. Make sure you take a few minutes to uncover the hydrants, and to make safe path to reach them. This simple request can save time that would be needed to fight a fire.

Finally, we ask the residents make sure that when they shovel their sidewalk, they also have their curb boxes visible, and if they have any other utility covers on the sidewalk, they are also cleared off and accessible. In the event of a water main break, or a service line break, these boxes are the way that we are able to turn the water off to make repairs or prevent your service from causing more damage. Valuable time may need to be spent if our employees need to locate these covers under many inches or snow and ice. Shoveling them out and having them easily accessible can mean the difference between no property damage because we were able to quickly turn the water off, or increased damage to personal property and the roads.

The citizens of Philadelphia always work together, and with a little assistance from each neighbor we will be in a better position following the storm to make sure any challenges that come up will not be hindered by having to look under piles of snow or inches of ice. We thank our customers in advance for working with us during this coming winter storm.

Philadelphia Water serves the Greater Philadelphia region by providing integrated water, wastewater, and stormwater services. The utility plans for, operates, and maintains both the infrastructure and the organization necessary to purvey high-quality drinking water to provide an adequate and reliable water supply for all household, commercial, and community needs, and to sustain and enhance the region's watersheds and quality of life by managing wastewater and stormwater effectively. Visit us: www.phila.gov/water and www.phillywatersheds.org/blog