

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection  
Drinking Water Program  
Updated January 2022

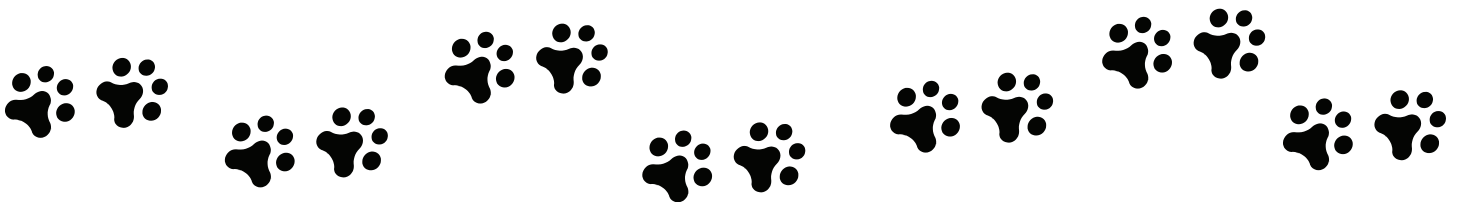
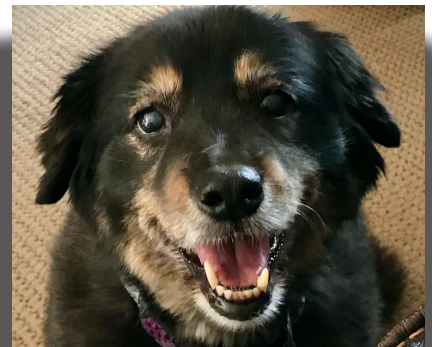
## Protect Local Drinking Water: Pick Up Your Dog's Waste

Whether you are walking your dog on your own land or on public land, it is important to pick up your dog's waste. The average dog generates  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. of waste per day. That  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. contains billions of fecal coliform bacteria. Fecal coliform bacteria can contaminate public and private drinking water supplies and can make people sick. This happens when dog waste is left on the ground and washes down into ground water or it flows with stormwater into rivers and streams that enter public drinking water reservoirs. In addition to illness, this pollution encourages weed growth, algae blooms that can result in taste and odor problems, and fish kills.

Dog waste left on the ground may contain hookworms, roundworms and other parasites that can be spread to adults and children walking barefoot or playing in the grass. Viruses can also spread among dogs in this way.

Bagging dog waste and putting it in the trash is a better idea than leaving it on the ground. Massachusetts trash is sent either to a waste-to-energy facility where it is burned to produce energy or to landfills that have special liners that prevent pollutants from leaving the site.

- Do not leave dog waste on the ground.
- Pick up dog waste with a bag and put it in the trash.
- Do not dispose of dog waste in wetlands, storm drains, or compost piles.
- It is not good practice to locate dog parks near public or private drinking water supplies.



*For more information about impacts to drinking water from dog waste, email the MassDEP's Drinking Water Program at [program.director-dwp@mass.gov](mailto:program.director-dwp@mass.gov).*