

## MWWCA 2009 Planning Session Guidelines for Open House

The goal of establishing this guideline is to inform the public on what wastewater treatment plants do on a daily basis by offering open house tours. These are great opportunities to convey to people what a necessity our service is while hopefully removing the “yuck factor”. During the 2009 planning session, the MWWCA executive committee established this goal with the understanding that the majority of our users have no idea what takes place at, or even in some cases, know the location of their own treatment plant. This guideline was established to help facilities prepare and educate our rate & tax payers on what it is that we do, the level of services we provided, issues that affect both you and them, and a chance to further illustrate how the money they provide is well spent and worth providing. Although reactions vary amongst people taking these tours, the vast majority of people will appreciate what we do and will walk away amazed at the job we do for both our communities and the environment.



**MWWCA**

60 Community Drive • Augusta, ME 04330

1-800-452-8786

[www.mwwca.org](http://www.mwwca.org)

## Suggested Guidelines for a Facility

# *Open House*

**PRESENTED BY:**



## Goals

- Educate the public
- Explain wastewater treatment
- Create community involvement
- Showcase your facility

## Advertise

- Set date well in advance
- Try to avoid major local events
- Utilize local news papers, town website, posters & flyers
- Contact local chamber of commerce
- Local business involvement
- Contact local schools, town council & city officials

## Overall Plant Appearance

You and your staff will want to take extra steps to ensure that your facility is presentable. Make sure the grounds are well manicured and maintained. You may want to apply a fresh coat of paint on highly visible structures and equipment. If your budget allows you may want to dress up some areas with inexpensive annuals and/or shrubs. Ensure that your facility sign is in good condition, as this is usually the first thing to be seen. All offices and buildings should be cleaned (yes, even solids handling rooms) and neatly organized. Restrooms should be SPOTLESS! Hazardous area should be avoided. Remember that perception is key and that if your facility is clean and neat then the public will correlate the pride we take in our chosen profession.

## Welcoming Your Guests

You will want to designate an area to welcome your guests. This room should be adequate to accommodate an anticipated amount of people. In the welcome area you may want to offer some snacks and beverages. Consider your audience, and if applicable, ensure tour areas are handicap accessible. A brochure is a good way to get information to your guests. You may want to include some fun facts about what you do. Highlight any plant and/or operator awards that may have been received. You may also want to provide information on the plant history, flow and equipment descriptions, permit limitations and any other issues that affect your facility. A breakdown of your O&M budget and simple schedule of equipment to be replaced could be useful in displaying the complexity of managing your facilities.

## Staffing

On the day of the open house you will need to have adequate staffing to assist your guests. Ensure that your staff is well versed on the plant description, capabilities, history, discharge permit, and related operating cost.

