

BlueCross BlueShield of Texas | Experience. Wellness. Everywhere.<sup>SM</sup>

**Affordable, reliable health insurance starts here.**

[Get a FREE custom quote](#)



[Amtrak California Zephyr train to Chicago derails in Nebraska...](#)



**• News**

- [Send Tips, Video, Pics](#)
- [Local News](#)
- [National / World](#)
- [Healthbeat](#)
- [I-Team](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Strange News](#)
- [Consumer](#)
- [Live Green with ABC7](#)
- [ABC7 Sports](#)
- [espnchicago.com](#)
- [ABC7 Newsteam Bios](#)
- [Most Popular Stories](#)
- [School Closings](#)
- [MORE TOPICS +](#)

**• Weather**



80°

M/SUNNY

- [Weather Home](#)
- [Interactive Radar](#)
- [Severe Weather](#)
- [Weather Sketchers](#)
- [Web Cameras](#)
- [MORE TOPICS +](#)

**• Video & Photos**

- [Video](#)
- [Live Video](#)
- [Most Popular Video](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Viewer Photos](#)

**• More ABC7**

- [Traffic](#)
- [Recipes/Hungry Hound](#)
- [TV Listings/ABC7 Shows](#)
- [Live Well Network](#)

- [ABC Shows](#)
- [Lottery/Horoscopes](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Contact Us/Station Info](#)
- [ABC7 Jobs](#)
- [Contests/Promotions](#)
- [Games](#)

• **Marketplace**

- [Chicago Area Jobs](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Get Coupons](#)

[SEE IT ON TV? CHECK HERE](#)

**Local**



## 2 locks opened during record rainfall

Monday, July 25, 2011

Tags:

[local](#), [michelle gallardo](#)

- [Comment Now](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Print](#)
- [Report a typo](#)
- 



[Michelle Gallardo](#)  
More: [Bio](#), [News Team](#)

July 25, 2011 (WLS) -- The Chicago Water Reclamation District opened two sets of locks to allow millions of gallons of storm water into Lake Michigan, leading to a swimming ban until officials could make sure the water was safe.

A swim ban remains in place at Oak Street Beach due to water quality as of Monday afternoon. A swim advisory- where swimming is permitted, but caution is advised- is in effect at Rainbow Beach, 12th Street Beach, Montrose Beach and Osterman (Hollywood) Beach.

Opening the locks likely saved the city from an even more serious flooding event. It works like this: Whenever Chicago gets a major rainfall that causes flooding, people start pointing fingers as to who is to blame. The antiquated sewer system? The water reclamation district?

On Monday, a civil engineer explained the procedure to ABC7 at the command center.

"There is no magic button to relieve flooding. And there are no magic gates either," Ed Staudacher, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, said.

When nearly seven inches of rain fell in the span of two hours in the city and suburbs over the weekend, the control room at the metropolitan water reclamation district went into action. They monitor the storm through radar, an on-call meteorologist, and the rising levels at their different waterways to make sure they didn't overflow. At 2:30 a.m., the call was made to open the locks at Wilmette. At 3:30 a.m., the locks at the Chicago River downtown were opened. But this isn't a decision they made lightly.

"It's a last resort to prevent any type of overbank flooding and the reason why it's a last resort is because we get our drinking water from Lake Michigan, so we're trying to protect Lake Michigan and at the same time protect the homeowners along those waterways from flooding," Staudacher said.

The locks are only opened when the river levels, which are usually kept lower than the lake level, threaten to overflow. That's when the district allows the storm water to go into Lake Michigan. However, even once the locks are opened, relief isn't be immediate

"A lot of people believe if you open these gates it's going to stop flooding in their basements. These systems don't have the capacity to get the storm water to us," Staudacher said.

Furthermore, the locks will only impact the communities that are adjacent to the waterways controlled by the district.

"You have areas that drain into Des Plaines and Salt cCreek and nothing we do with the locks will affect those areas. We have no effect on those natural rivers," Staudacher said. "By us opening the gates, it has very little impact on the homes in these outlying suburbs."

A recently built deep tunnel system that increases the reclamation district's storm and sewage capacity is functional, but Staudacher said it was already half full from a previous storm when Chicago was drenched. A system of reservoirs is currently under construction. Those will increase capacity tenfold. However, the first one won't be open till 2015.

Official say that Saturday's rainfall was so intense that even had the reservoirs been built, there would still be flooding.

(Copyright ©2011 WLS-TV/DT. All Rights Reserved.)

[Get more Local »](#)

Tags:

[local](#), [michelle gallardo](#)

- [Comment Now](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Print](#)
- [Report a typo](#)
- 

[Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.

### Recently Published



[Prosecutors appeal ruling in Drew Peterson case](#)

- o 40 min ago
- o [Comment Now](#)
- o [Share](#)



[Hurricane Irene impacts Chicago travelers](#)

- o [Comment Now](#)
- o [Share](#)



[ComEd sending crews to East Coast ahead of Irene](#)

- o [Comment Now](#)
- o [Share](#)

0 comments

[Post A Comment](#)

Be the first to make a comment!

(Max. 500 Characters)

abc7chicago.com and its parent and affiliated companies are not responsible for the content of comments posted above or for anything arising out of use of the above comments or other interaction among the users. While we may delete comments and block or take other action against users who we determine at our discretion have violated our rules, we cannot always do so. Please see our [Terms of Use](#) for additional policies applicable to these comments.

Post

By commenting, you agree to our [Terms of Use](#).

**Sponsored Content**

[What Not To Tell The Boss](#)



When it comes to communicating with your boss, some things are better left unsaid. Here are 15 phrases your boss doesn't want to hear. [More](#)

[Grants For School If You Qualify](#)



Return to school with a grant if you qualify. You may be losing up to \$21,900 every year you don't go back to school. [More](#)

[See Your 2011 Credit Scores Free!](#)



Get all 3 credit scores from all 3 credit bureaus in 3 easy steps free and online! [More](#)

Advertisement

Share this Story

Share 3

3 retweet

0

Recommend

Sign Up to see what your friends recommend.

News Headlines



- [Hurricane Irene impacts Chicago travelers](#)
- [Amtrak train to Chicago derails in Nebraska](#) 1 min ago
- [4 firefighters hurt in Englewood flashover](#)
- ['Echo,' the parrot, on ABC7](#)
- [Prosecutors appeal ruling in Drew Peterson case](#) 40 min ago
- [Road Rage: Man run over by car dies week later](#)
- [ComEd sending crews to East Coast ahead of Irene](#)
- [Police shoot driver in Ike chase](#)
- [Judge sides with Gov. Quinn in pay dispute](#)
- ['Armed and dangerous' man wanted in 2 shootings](#)
- [Man seriously hurt in SW Side fire](#)
- [MLK memorial dedication, church group trip postponed](#)
- [City of Gary to mark Michael Jackson's birthday](#)
- [Husband sentenced for setting wife on fire](#)

**MORE:** [Local](#) | [Illinois News](#) | [Indiana News](#) | [Wisconsin News](#)

• 1.



• [ABC7 Weather Forecast](#)

• 2.



• [Mid-Day Web Brief](#)

• 3.



• [4 firefighters hurt in Englewood flashover](#)

• 4.



• [Hurricane Irene impacts Chicago travelers](#)

[All Live Video : All Video](#) »  
[ABC News: Top Stories](#)

1. [Hurricane Irene: East Coast Prepares for Historic Storm](#)
2. [Hospitals Get Ready for Hurricane Irene](#)
3. [What to Do to Prepare for a Hurricane](#)
4. [Hurricane Fears: How to Talk to Kids](#)
5. [Photos: Hurricane Irene Closer to U.S.](#)
6. [Obama Ends Vacation Early for Irene](#)
7. [Fed's Bernanke: No More Stimulus For You!](#)
8. [NATO Planes Hits Gadhafi Hometown](#)
9. [16 Killed in UN Bombing in Nigeria](#)
10. [Missing Utah Mom: Family Fight Escalates](#)

## [Most Popular](#)

[Go to Most Popular](#)  
Most Viewed Stories

 [Hurricane Irene impacts Chicago travelers](#)  
Most Viewed Video

 [East Coast watching Irene](#)  
Most Viewed Photos

 [Hurricane Irene approaches East Coast](#)

### Sponsored Listings

#### 53 yr Old Mom Looks 30

\$5 Wrinkle Cream EVERYBODY Is Using. Find Out Why Millions Look 25!  
[www.mylifestylesecrets.com](http://www.mylifestylesecrets.com)

#### Official Barack Obama Website

President Obama needs your help to move America forward. Join us now.  
[BarackObama.com](http://BarackObama.com)

#### 1 Trick to Relieve Joints

See how you can relieve your joints with this fast and easy trick...  
[EverydayLifestyles.com](http://EverydayLifestyles.com)

[Buy a link here](#)

Advertisement

BlueCross BlueShield of Texas  
*Experience. Wellness. Everywhere.™*

See budget friendly health plans.  
**Right now.**

Get a **FREE** custom quote

- [abc7chicago.com home](#)
- [Site Map](#)
- [RSS](#)
- [Advertise with Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Technical Help](#)
- [ABC.com](#)
- [ABCNews.com](#)
  
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Interest-Based Ads](#)
- [Safety Information for this site](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- Copyright ©2011 ABC Inc., WLS-TV/DT Chicago, IL. All Rights Reserved.