

BMP 36

Catch Basin Maintenance

Catch basins are box-shaped, concrete structures located where stormwater enters a storm drain or where tiles intersect. The function of a catch basin is to collect surface water and route it to an underground tile that carries the water to the nearest drainage ditch or stream. During sudden or heavy rain storms, flooding of low-lying areas and basements can occur because of the extra volume of water entering the system. This is usually a temporary problem until that “extra” water has a chance to drain away. By keeping catch basins clean and free of sediments and other materials you can extend the life, capacity, and functionality of your stormwater drainage system.

Check and clean out catch basins regularly. Many catch basins extend below the outlet pipe leaving an area at the bottom of the catch basin, called the catchment area, where sediment and other pollutants can collect.

- Catch basins should be checked and cleaned out regularly; otherwise any accumulated pollutants can get stirred up during a storm and wash into the outlet.
- Larger debris that collects in the catch basin must be removed because it can become lodged creating a blockage and back up of water, a blow-out of the subsurface tile, or it can wash through the outlet pipe to a stream.
- By regular inspection, catch basins should be cleaned out before deposits fill 60 percent of the area below the outlet pipe (catchment area). Shallow catch basins can be cleaned with a shovel, spade, or hand trowel.

- If the catch basin cover is rectangular, be careful not to drop it in the opening when removing, because it may become wedged and difficult to retrieve.
- An alternative is to hire a professional contractor to help maintain catch basins.
- County and city owned catch basins are generally taken care of by their respective sanitation departments. If, as a private owner, you’re unaware if your property has a catch basin, your county or city sanitation department or county engineer’s office may be able to help you locate it, determine if it needs to be cleaned, and make sure the cleaning is done correctly at your expense.

Regularly remove debris from storm drain grates. Storm drain grates or covers can become clogged with litter, leaves, grass clippings, crop residue, small branches and twigs, and trash. Regular inspection and removal of debris can help prevent blockages that could lead to localized flooding.

Maintain your sump pump. Sump pumps installed in basements are designed to drain and pump water away from your home. They need regular checking to insure that they’re working correctly. It’s best to have basement floor drains connected to a sump pump to prevent back-up water and flooding.

Stencil your storm drains to alert others. Nothing but storm water should enter a storm drain because the water goes directly into a stream untreated. To alert everyone who comes in contact with your storm drains or catch basins of this fact, a message can be stenciled in paint on the grate or exposed concrete. The Ottawa River Coalition uses a message that says. ***DUMP NO WASTE, DRAINS TO STREAM.*** For information on stenciling your storm drains or catch basins contact the Ottawa River Coalition.