

Maintaining Catch Basins



Stormwater runoff on streets often drains into catch basins. Catch basins are commonly installed in the center of a street or along the street curb or gutter. (Catch basins are sometimes referred to as “storm drains.”)

The typical catch basin consists of a grate at the surface of the road, with an underground, concrete tank beneath it. Stormwater gathers in the tank and sediments settle to the bottom. The cleaner water on top then flows through pipes to a variety of destinations: into a swale, a stormwater pond, or directly into a river or stream.

Catch basins play an important role in managing stormwater runoff, because they help prevent neighborhood flooding and erosion.

Thurston County requires property owners to inspect and maintain catch basins on private roads and lanes, including those located on commonly owned land within a housing development.



A typical catch basin.

How to Maintain Your Catch Basin

➤ Remove Debris from Grates

The grates of catch basins can become clogged with litter or leaves, especially in the spring and fall. Regularly inspect the grate and remove debris.

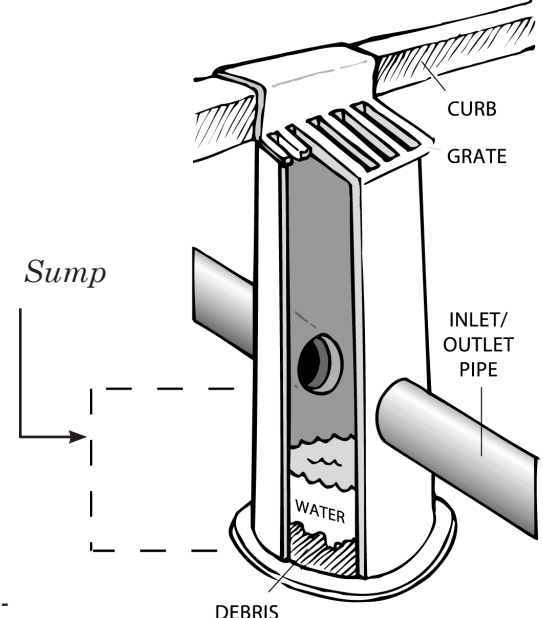
➤ Remove Sediment Buildup

Look through the grate and try to find the outlet pipe. If the pipe is covered in water and it's not raining, there's probably too much sediment in the catch basin or the pipe is clogged. Typically, catch basins should be cleaned out before the sump is 1/3 full. (The sump is the distance between the bottom of the pipe and the bottom of the structure, as shown to the right.)

To find out how much material has accumulated in the storage area of your catch basin, insert a long pipe or broom stick into the top grate.

Notice where the pipe or stick hits the debris and continue to the bottom to estimate the depth of accumulation.

If the catch basin is on private property, the best approach is to hire a professional to remove sediment buildup in the sump.



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Maintaining Drywells

Like catch basins (see reverse side), drywells drain stormwater from paved areas such as streets, roads and parking lots. Unlike catch basins, drywells simply infiltrate water into the surrounding soils rather than conveying the water to another destination.

The typical drywell has a reinforced, circular lid at the surface of the road, with a perforated, concrete cylinder beneath it. The cylinder is surrounded by gravelly, loose soils. Water enters the cylinder and gradually seeps out of the perforations to infiltrate into the soil.

Drywells are commonly found in neighborhoods built in the 1970s or earlier.

Thurston County requires property owners to inspect and maintain drywells on private roads and lanes, including those located on commonly owned land within a housing development.

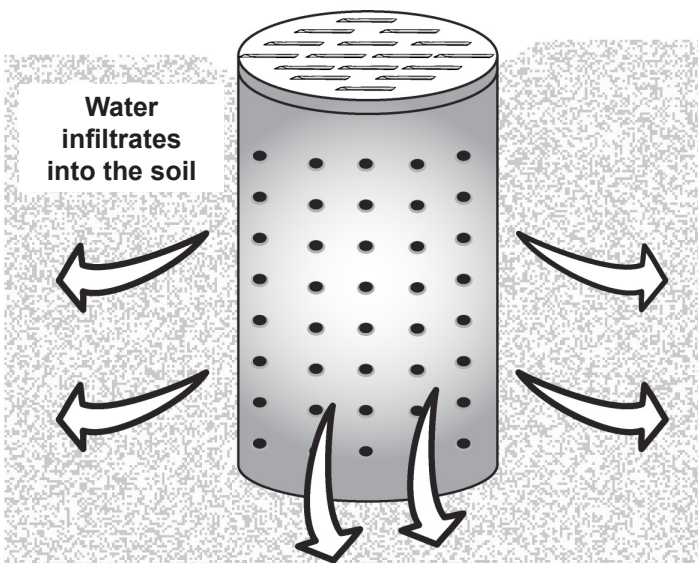


A typical drywell.

How to Maintain Your Drywell

➤ Remove Debris from Grates

Drywell lids can become clogged with litter or leaves, especially in the spring and fall. Regularly inspect the lid and remove debris.



➤ Remove Sediment Buildup

If the drywell has a grate, look through it to see if there's standing water in the drywell. Most drywells are designed to infiltrate water over a 72-hour period. If the drywell still has standing water several days after a rainfall, the cylinder is probably clogged with debris.

To find out how much material has accumulated in your drywell, insert a long pipe or broom stick into the top grate (if possible). Notice where the pipe or stick hits the debris and continue to the bottom to estimate the depth of accumulation. Drywells should be cleaned when sediment fills 1/3 or more of the cylinder.

If the street is privately owned, the best approach is to hire a professional to remove sediment buildup in the drywell.

For more information about maintaining catch basins and drywells, call the Thurston County Storm and Surface Water Utility at (360) 357-2491.