



Stormwater Facilities & Maintenance

Oil/Water Separators

Standard oil/water separators are underground vaults installed between a drain and a connection to either a sewer or stormwater pipe. These vaults are designed with baffles or coalescing plates to trap sediment and oil.

There are two types of Oil Water Separators found in Thurston County: Figure 1 illustrates the Coalescing Plates Separator and Figure 2 illustrates the Gravity Drained Separator.

Pro Tip:
All sludge must be completely removed from each chamber. Once finished with the inspection & service, fill up the separator with clean water BEFORE discharging to it again.

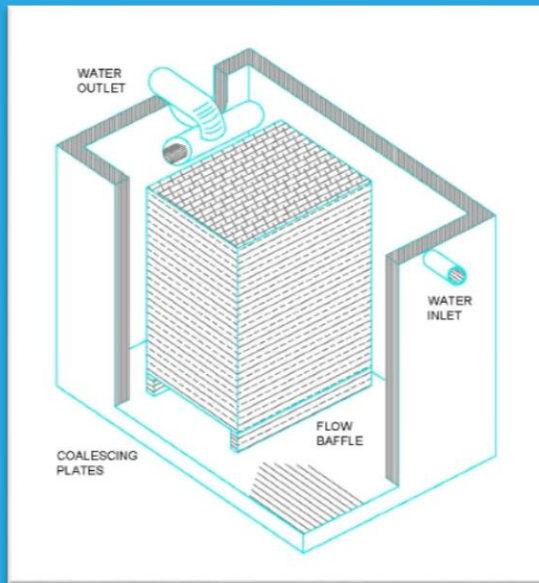


Figure 1:
Coalescing Plate Separator

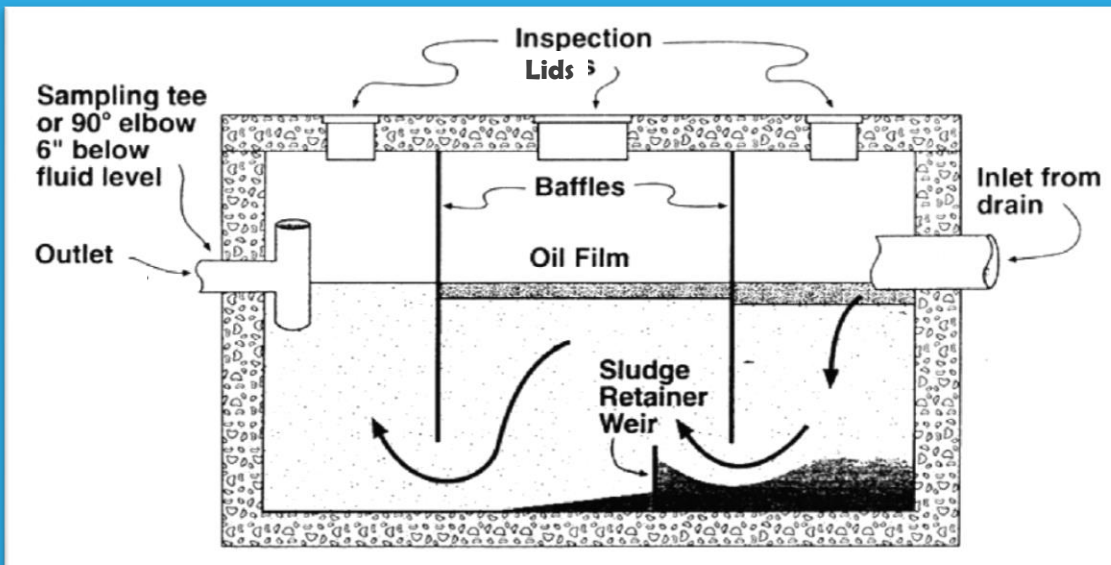


Figure 2:
Gravity-Drained Separator

Maintenance required when:

- Sediment in bottom of vault above 6 inches
- Sediment on outside of plates
- Trash or debris in vault or pipes
- Oil more than 1 inch deep on water surface
- Damaged plates
- Damaged pipes
- Damaged baffles
- Vault walls with cracks larger than 1/2 inch

Contact your HOA or property manager immediately if:

- Sheen or oil found in water leaving structure
- Structure is overflowing
- Access cover is missing or damaged

Visit us online:
ThurstonStormwater.org

Don't let your systems fail.

An oil/water separator's efficiency is reduced most by an accumulation of settled solids, sludge, and oil. We recommend that you inspect the separator every month, and again after a significant storm.



Oil/Water Separator after cleaned



Oil/Water Separator before cleaned

Sludge that builds up in a separator can be difficult and expensive to clean out. Installing a catch basin before your oil/water separator will trap solids that can be shoveled out before they reach the separator.

Keep water clean. Protect county roads from flooding. Save money.

Use a pole that can reach the bottom of your separator to see if there is any resistance as you push to reach the bottom. Resistance means there is sludge build up. Service the separator when the build up is about six inches deep in the inlet chamber.



Can you identify the entry plate of your Oil/Water Separator?

For additional information regarding stormwater management in Thurston County, reference our Stormwater Drainage Manual at DM.ThurstonStormwater.org.