

Storm Drain & Catch Basin Cleaning Information

Our Department of Public Works is constantly maintaining our storm drains and catch basins to keep them operating effectively. This work includes cleaning out the catch basins, making necessary repairs and regular street sweeping. However, we are asking residents to help us in this effort by checking and clearing the grates and the area around the catch basins near your home, especially in the fall, winter, before and after storms, when leaves and debris can cause blockages.

Properly Maintained Storm Drains and Catch Basins can:

- Reduce flooding and direct storm water away from doing damage.
- Prevent water overflow that can be harmful to grass and plants.
- Reduce risk of icy patches that form from water pooling and freezing in winter.

Here's how to do your part when it comes to keeping storm drains clean.

Inspect your storm drains before it rains

It's essential to inspect your storm drain right before a rainstorm. If the local weather calls for heavy rains or snow, head out to check if the nearest storm drains are clear of debris. Safely remove any debris from the catch basin to ensure the water that washes onto your property flows into the storm drain without obstructions. Use a rake to clear any leaves, tree branches from the catch basin.

Check your storm drains after a storm

You should also check your storm drains after an outpouring. Ensure that the openings to catch basins haven't been clogged and clear away any debris so that any melting ice and snow can drain into the catch basin properly. This also ensures that debris doesn't end up in the storm drain during the next storm. When cleaning debris, never try to remove the grate and only do so when it is not actively flooding, as this can present a dangerous situation.

Dispose of trash properly

Your trash can also end up clogging nearby storm drains, so pay attention to how you dispose of it. For instance, make sure your trash cans and recycling bins always have tight lids on them and pick up any trash you see lying around the street.

When raking leaves, don't leave them lying around the street. Instead, place them into your leaf bag or compost pile, together with things like lawn clippings. Other best practices to follow include not leaving shoveled snow in your driveway and avoiding excessive use of sand in your driveway.

Pick up after your pets

Your pets can also be part of the problem when it comes to dirty and clogged storm drains. Ensure that you are diligent about picking up after your dog and disposing of the waste in a trash can or through other accepted means. Otherwise, stormwater will wash any pet waste down the drain, where it ends up harming water wildlife.

Why Make the Effort to Keep Your Storm Drain Clean?

Storm drains are part of most city/town landscapes and exist to help keep water from entering your crawl space and damaging your foundation. But during certain times of the year, especially in the fall, those grated storm drains can get clogged and dirty with dead leaves, trash, and all sorts of contaminants.

That means storm drains are no longer able to divert stormwater runoff away from your property and into the ocean or streams. If that happens during a heavy storm, it can lead to localized flooding in the street outside your home. Severe flooding can end up affecting your yard and basement.

Additionally, if storm drains are not cleaned, trash and contaminants eventually make their way back to the local streams, rivers, and nearby oceans, where they impact the ecosystem negatively.