

Catch Basin Inspection and Cleaning

Introduction

Catch basins help minimize flooding and protect water quality by removing trash, sediment, decaying debris, and other solids from stormwater runoff. These materials are retained in a sump below the invert of the outlet pipe (older catch basins may not have a sump). Catch basin cleaning reduces foul odors, prevents clogs in the storm drain system, and reduces the loading of trash, suspended solids, nutrients, bacteria, and other pollutants to receiving waters.

The goal of this written Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to provide guidance to municipal employees on catch basin inspection and cleaning to reduce the discharge of pollutants from the MS4. If services are contracted, this SOP should be provided to the contractor. The contract should specify that the contractor is responsible for compliance with all applicable laws.

This SOP can also be used for inspection of catch basins or manholes for the purpose of conducting catchment investigations as part of the municipality's Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination program.

The collections department performs routine inspections, cleaning, and maintenance of the approximately 9,148 catch basins that are located within the MS4 regulated area. The City will include an optimization plan for catch basin cleaning and inspection in its annual report.

The City will implement the following catch basin inspection and cleaning procedures to reduce the discharge of pollutants from the MS4:

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Procedures

Inspection and Cleaning Frequency

- Each catch basin should be cleaned and inspected at least annually.
- Catch basins near construction activities (roadway construction, residential, commercial, or industrial development or redevelopment) or high-use areas should be inspected and cleaned more frequently if inspection finds excessive sediments or debris loadings.
- Catch basins should be cleaned to ensure that they are no more than 50 percent full at any time. Establish inspection and maintenance frequencies needed to meet this "50 percent" goal. If a catch basin sump is more than 50 percent full during two consecutive inspections, document the findings, investigate the contributing drainage area for sources of excessive sediment loading, and, if possible, address the contributing sources. If no contributing sources are found, increase the inspection and cleaning frequencies of the sump.
- Street sweeping performed on an appropriate schedule will reduce the amount of sediment, debris, and organic matter entering the catch basins, which will in turn reduce the frequency with which they need to be cleaned. Street sweeping schedules should also be adjusted based on catch basin inspection findings, with more frequent sweepings for areas with higher catch basin loads.

- In accordance with impaired water requirements, the City will prioritize catch basin cleaning and inspection in catchments with TMDLs/impairments when creating their optimization schedule to ensure that these catch basins are no more than 50% full and reduce stormwater pollution to impaired waterbodies.

Inspection and Cleaning Procedures

Catch basin inspection and cleaning procedures should address both the grate opening and the catch basin structure, including the sump and any inlet and outlet pipes. Document any and all observations about the condition of the catch basin structure and water quality (an inspection form and log of catch basins cleaned or inspected are included in the attachments). Collect data on the condition of the physical basin structure, its frame, and the grate, as well as on the quality of stormwater conveyed by the structure. Observations like those below can indicate sources of pollution within the storm drain system:

- Oil sheen
- Discoloration
- Trash and debris

Both oil and bacteria can create a sheen on the water's surface. The source of a sheen can be differentiating by disturbing it (e.g., with a pole). A sheen caused by oil will remain intact and move in a swirl pattern, while a sheen caused by bacteria will separate and appear "blocky." The bacteria that cause this sheen are naturally occurring iron bacteria – they are not considered a pollutant but should be noted. Other types of bacteria, such as fecal bacteria, are considered pollutants and their discovery should be recorded.

Observations like those below can indicate a potential connection of a sanitary sewer to the storm drain system, which is an illicit discharge:

- Indications of sanitary sewage, including fecal matter or sewage odors
- Foaming, such as from detergent
- Optical enhancers, fluorescent dye added to laundry detergent

In general, adhere to the following procedures when inspecting and cleaning catch basins. Record the findings in the log in the attachments:

1. Implement appropriate traffic safety procedures (e.g., traffic cones) prior to and during the catch basin inspection and cleaning process.
2. Work upstream to downstream in a given drainage network.
3. Clean sediment and trash off of the grate.
4. Visually inspect the outside of the grate.
5. Remove the grate and visually inspect the inside of the catch basin to determine cleaning needs.
6. Inspect the catch basin for structural integrity.
7. Determine the most appropriate equipment and method for cleaning the basin:

- a. Manually use a shovel to remove accumulated sediments.
 - b. Use a bucket loader to remove accumulated sediments.
 - c. Use a high pressure washer to clean any remaining material out of the catch basin while capturing the slurry with a vacuum.
 - d. If necessary, after the catch basin is cleaned, use the rodder of the vacuum truck to clean the downstream pipe and pull back sediment that might have entered it.
8. If contamination is suspected, chemical analysis will be required to determine if the materials comply with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Hazardous Waste Regulations, 310 CMR 30.000 (https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/xl/310cmr30_7883_54357.pdf). The chemical analysis required will depend on suspected contaminants. Note the identification number of the catch basin on the sample label and note sample collection on the Catch Basin Inspection Form.

Handling and Disposal of Catch Basin Cleanings

- Properly dispose of collected sediments and catch basin cleanings (solid material, such as leaves, sand, and twigs removed from stormwater collection systems during cleaning operations).
- Cleanings from stormwater-only drainage systems may be disposed at any landfill that is permitted by MassDEP to accept solid waste. MassDEP does not routinely require stormwater-only catch basin cleanings to be tested before disposal, unless there is evidence that they have been contaminated by a spill or some other means.
- Screenings may need to be placed in a drying bed to allow water to evaporate before proper disposal. In this case, ensure that the screenings are managed properly to prevent pollution.
- Catch basin cleanings must be handled and disposed in accordance with compliance with the applicable MassDEP regulations, policies, and guidance (<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/03/09/catch-basins.pdf>).

Documentation and Reporting

The following information should be documented and included in the municipality's annual report – use the catch basin inspection log provided in the attachments to document the information to include in the report (alternatively, obtain records of volume of debris removed to include in the report):

- Metrics and other information used to reach the determination that the established plan for cleaning and maintenance is optimal for the MS4 (include in the SWMP and first annual report)
- Any action taken in response to excessive sediment or debris loadings
- Total number of catch basins
- Number of catch basins inspected
- Number of catch basins cleaned
- Total volume or mass of material removed from catch basins.

Employee Training

- Employees who perform catch basin cleaning and inspection are trained annually on these procedures and the proper operation of related equipment.
- Employees are also trained on stormwater pollution prevention, illicit discharge detection and elimination (IDDE) procedures, and spill and response procedures.
- If services are contracted, the contractor should be given a copy of this and any applicable SOPs to ensure compliance with MS4 regulations