

ADOPT A CATCH BASIN

Looking for an easy way to protect our water resources? Adopt a catch basin!

Catch basins are storm sewer inlets that drain excess rain and snow melt away from pavement and into a system of underground piping, culverts, and/or drainage ditches. Contrary to popular belief, pet wastes, oil and other materials dumped into storm sewer grates do not go to the wastewater treatment plant, but instead flow directly into streams and lakes. For example, dumping oil into a storm sewer grate has immense consequences; when it reaches the water, just one pint of oil can create a slick as large as a football field.

Luckily, catch basins serve as the first line of defense against stormwater pollution. Their grates are designed to prevent some debris from entering the system and clogging pipes or discharging into waterbodies. However, the grates only capture larger pieces of debris and can become clogged with yard waste and litter. That's why it's important to maintain catch basins to prevent localized flooding and minimize surface water pollution. While municipalities frequently street sweep and inspect catch basins, citizens can help!



How Can I Adopt My Own 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. Encourage neighbors to adopt the catch basins in front of their homes and keep them free of debris.

Ensure Regular Cleaning: Catch basins should be cleaned out before the storage area is half full. Once this level is reached, debris begins to wash into sewer pipes. Cleaning these storage areas should be performed by your local jurisdiction or a private contractor, but you can be your community's "eyes and ears" to alert them about problem areas. Contact your local public works department if you are concerned about the catch basins in your neighborhood.

Label Your Storm Drains: Stenciled signs or applied decals that read "Dump No Waste - Drains to River" are a good reminder that nothing but water should enter a storm drain.

Teach Your Neighbors: When people realize storm drains discharge to waterways rather than a treatment plant, they are more likely to avoid polluting them. Make sure your neighbors understand how these systems work.

