



# Catch Basin Care



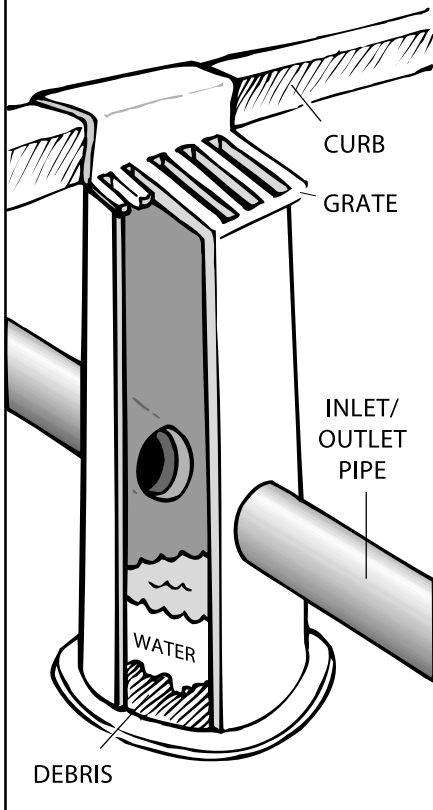
Guide No. 2

## Why be concerned?

Catch basins are storm sewer inlets that filter out debris such as leaves and litter. They are typically located next to street curbs or in the rear yards of residential areas.

It is important to maintain catch basins to prevent storm sewer blockages and minimize the amount of pollutants entering storm sewers. Storm sewers either discharge into detention basins or directly into streams.

Clogged catch basins can also cause water to pond along streets and in yards. This flooding can be a nuisance to motorists and homeowners.



## Are You Responsible for Catch Basin Care?

Your Homeowner's Association is responsible for catch basin maintenance if you live in a subdivision, site condominium or attached condominium neighborhood with private roads. Catchbasins in public roads are maintained by the Washtenaw County Road Commission or your City or Village Public Works or Utility Department.

Stormwater drainage systems are typically designed to remove water from a developed area as quickly as possible during a storm. While these systems are convenient for urban residents, they also carry pollutants to surface waters at a "rapid transit" pace. Contrary to popular belief, pet wastes, oil and other materials dumped into storm sewer grates do not go to the waste water treatment plant, but flow directly into streams and lakes. For example: dumping oil into a storm sewer grate has almost unthinkable consequences. When it reaches the water, five quarts of oil can create a slick as large as two football fields and persist on mud or plants for six months or more.

## How are Catch Basins Maintained?

### 1) 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.

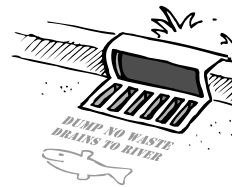
### 2) Remove Debris from Storage Area

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 should be done in the spring after the first large snow melt, in the fall after trees have shed their leaves, and additionally if needed.

To find out how much material has accumulated in the storage area of a catch basin, insert a long pipe or broom stick into the storm drain grate. Notice where the pipe or stick hits the debris and continue to the bottom to estimate the depth of accumulation. Cleaning these storage areas should be performed by a private contractor. For assistance identifying suitable contractors, contact one of the agencies listed under "Getting Help."

## Stenciling Your Storm Drains



Stenciled or applied decals that read "Dump No Waste - Drains to Rouge River" are a good reminder that nothing but water belongs down a storm drain. Contact the Drain Commissioner's Office for more information about participating in storm drain stenciling.

## GETTING HELP

Washtenaw County  
Drain Commissioner ..... (734) 222-6833

Washtenaw County  
Road Commission ..... (734) 761-1500

Your City or Village Utility  
Maintenance Dept.

Michigan Department of  
Environmental Quality ..... (800) 662-9278

see the Washtenaw County website at  
[www.ewashtenaw.org](http://www.ewashtenaw.org)

