

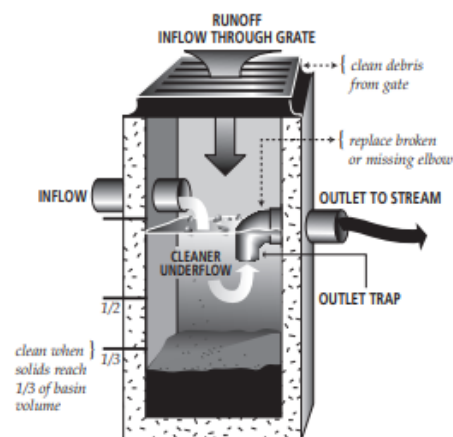
## Catch Basins and Organic Material

Towns and cities utilize catch basins to keep their sewer systems and outlet pipes running smoothly. A catch basin is a receptacle, reservoir, basin, or pit beneath a storm sewer opening, which is used for collecting surface water drainage or runoff<sup>1</sup>. These storm sewers, or storm drains, enter into the local water bodies, and that water eventually reaches the ocean. This network of waterways is referred to as a watershed. With this information in mind, it can be understood that it is very important to keep catch basins, the first doorway to the watershed, clear of debris. This debris includes many materials, but one major concern is organic material: leaves, grass, and branches.

## What are Your Responsibilities?

Although catch basins are designed to remove undesirable materials from runoff water, sometimes, they themselves can become an issue if they catch too much of this material and become clogged. Catch basins are required to be periodically cleaned out by municipalities, however you can have a positive impact on these drains, their caretakers, and your water quality and environment if you follow a number of simple recommendations.

- Do not dispose of yard waste (leaves, grass) in or around storm drains.
- Research the nearest locations to safely dispose of unsanitary liquids or organic materials prior to ‘dumping them’<sup>2</sup>.
- Do not litter.
- Consider using organic wastes such as leaves and grass as compost for other areas of your lawn or garden.
- Sweep your lot regularly to reduce the need for catch basin cleaning. Maintain tidiness near storm drains<sup>3</sup>.
- Contact your local municipal government if you have questions or concerns regarding your storm drains and catch basins.



<sup>1</sup> Michigan Government. "Water Resource Division: Catch Basin". Aug 25, 2017. [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-wb-nps-cab\\_250605\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-wb-nps-cab_250605_7.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>Environmental Services, City of Portland. "Environmentally Responsible Best Management Practices". <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/article/149532>

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