

What to Look for When Inspecting an Inlet

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What is an inlet and why do I need to inspect them?

An inlet is a structure that allows stormwater to enter a stormwater control system. They are sometimes called a “catch basin.” Inlets will be connected to one or more underground stormwater pipes depending on where in the system the inlet is located. Some inlets may connect to pipes only a few feet underground while other can be ten or more feet deep. The top of the inlet will be covered with a metal grate to protect people and other objects from falling into them while allowing water to freely enter them. The metal grate will be mounted in a frame (usually concrete or metal) that holds them tightly in place. The metal grates are very heavy and you shouldn’t try to lift them by hand (if they drop they could cut off fingers).

Properly working inlets



This is an inlet that is working properly. The grate is kept clean and the top of the inlet is at the same elevation as the surrounding ground allowing stormwater to freely enter the inlet.



Pipe connecting inside inlet.

Problems with inlets:



Inlet set at elevation higher than the surrounding ground. Stormwater flows around the inlet rather than entering it. This is causing erosion around inlet.



Inlet with filter bag in good condition.

Inlet with filter bag not maintained.

In locations where there are major sources of sediment, fine gravel or other debris a filter bag in the inlet will help keep those materials out of the water entering the inlet.



Inlet deteriorating due to concrete crumbling (possible salt damage) and damage to grate probably from contact with a snow plow. Maintenance is required to prevent water from entering outside the grate and eroding the soil around it, potentially causing a sink hole.



Sinkhole forming at outside edge of an inlet.



A long-neglected inlet with a maple tree growing up through the grate. The concrete around the grate has also broken up.



Yard waste accumulating on and around inlet.



Yard waste on an inlet with long term lack of maintenance, and plants growing through the inlet.



Inlet in landscaping bed nearly covered with stone and other debris.

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