

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR INFILTRATION AREA

WHAT IS AN INFILTRATION AREA?

An infiltration area is a small trench filled with stone that collects rainwater from paved surfaces such as driveways and allows it to absorb into the surrounding soil. An infiltration area receives rainwater from surface runoff, not underground pipes like a buried dry well. Infiltration areas are common on residential lots, where they are typically located next to driveways and at least 20 feet from a building. Their location can be identified by the stone at the surface.

WHY ARE INFILTRATION AREAS IMPORTANT?

Infiltration areas:

- Help reduce street flooding.
- Improve the health of local waterways by removing pollutants from stormwater runoff.

Infiltration areas need simple maintenance to keep stormwater flowing into them:

REMOVE SEDIMENT, LEAVES AND PLANT DEBRIS FROM PAVED AREA AND GRAVEL

Why is it important to maintain these practices?

An unmaintained infiltration area may:

- Cause flooding on other areas of your property if the stormwater is not able to flow into the infiltration area.
- Require a complete replacement of the facility, which can be very expensive.

By maintaining your infiltration area, you are doing your part to help protect your local streams and the Chesapeake Bay. Maintaining your infiltration area may be required by your municipality or local VSMP (Virginia Stormwater Management Program) Authority.

image source: Chesapeake Stormwater Network



To prevent flooding on your property or your neighbor's property, keep the drainage path to your infiltration area clear of any debris.

GOOD TO DO...

Monthly

- ✓ Remove sediment, vegetative debris and trash that have accumulated on the gravel infiltration area or the flow path to the infiltration area. Even small accumulations of sediment can cause rainwater to divert away from the infiltration area.
- ✓ Inspect your infiltration after storms to make sure that rainwater properly drains to and through the infiltration area. Standing water after 3 days means there is a clog in the infiltration area.

Seasonally

- ✓ Remove leaves/debris/sediment/vegetation from paved surfaces and the gravel infiltration area surface from April through November.
- ✓ Remove leaves/debris/sediment/vegetation from underdrain or observation well.
- ✓ Inspect structure for damage and repair as needed (i.e. clogged fabric filters, replace pea gravel/topsoil, etc.)
- ✓ Check for erosion and reestablish vegetation as needed.
- ✓ Mow vegetated filter strips, making sure clippings are mulched or spread away from paved or gravel areas.

As Needed

- ✓ Inform contractors working on your property of the infiltration area's location to prevent accidentally damaging it.
- ✓ To prevent damage be aware of infiltration area locations when doing snow removal.
- ✓ Aerate – don't allow soil in infiltration area to become compacted.
- ✓ Excavate and replace filter media.

DON'T...

- ✗ Remove an infiltration area or expand your driveway over top of the infiltration area.
- ✗ Place decks, sheds, or other structures above an infiltration area.
- ✗ Park cars or put any items on top of infiltration areas.
- ✗ Remove or drive over observations wells. They should be kept vertical.
- ✗ Blow grass clippings into the gravel surface of the infiltration area.
- ✗ Mulch flower beds adjacent to the infiltration area.
- ✗ Allow bare spots in grassy lawns near the infiltration area.



Overgrown, poorly maintained infiltration area

CAN I REMOVE THE INFILTRATION AREA?

If your infiltration area was installed as a condition of development, it cannot be removed. It is best to contact your municipality to discuss options before making any changes to your infiltration area.

TROUBLESHOOTING	SYMPTOM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	SOLUTION
	Standing water around the infiltration area.	If standing water occurs for more than 72 hours, the infiltration area may be clogged	The gravel may need to be cleaned or replaced. Contact your local VSMP Authority for further guidance.
Rainwater does not appear to be flowing to the infiltration area.	Leaves, sediment, or other plant debris may be blocking the flow path or clogging the filter fabric.	Remove leaves, sediment, and other plant debris from paved surfaces and along the flow path to the infiltration area.	

RECOMMENDED TIMEFRAMES FOR TYPICAL MAINTENANCE

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Remove leaves and debris including acorns, seeds, branches, grass clippings, sand/sediment, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

WHAT IF I NEED HELP OR HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Your municipality or local VSMP (Virginia Stormwater Management Program) Authority can answer your questions and provide additional guidance about maintaining your stormwater facility.

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