

October 17, 2018

How to minimize flooding – Help the City monitor catch basins

With autumn rains back in the forecast, people can help prevent flooding in their neighbourhoods by keeping an eye on catch basins.

“The first fall rains this year were sudden and heavy, generating large puddles and rising water levels in streams and lakes. This was a good reminder that people can help City crews keep catch basin grates clear to minimize localized flooding,” says Drew Hadfield, the City’s director of operations.

More than 3,300 catch basins divert water from Campbell River streets into storm drains and the sewer system. City crews inspect catch basins annually – and work to keep them clean during stormy seasons when debris builds up. Residents can help keep grates clear to prevent streets from flooding, reducing the chance of property damage and traffic and pollution hazards.

They are usually covered with grates that allow rain to run off the streets and block the way for larger objects. Some solids settle on the grate, while lighter material flows through.

At this time of year, catch basin grates can get clogged with leaves and other debris, preventing water from draining off the street. Water then builds up into ponds along streets, which sometimes leads to flooded intersections and nearby properties.

“Catch basins need special attention each fall and after periods of snow and ice each winter,” Hadfield adds. *“While City crews work to ensure leaves, branches, sand and snow are regularly cleared from catch basins to let rain or melting water drain off the street, we also welcome the assistance of community members.”*

How you can help

Both commercial and private property owners are asked to help clear catch basin grates of objects in front of their property to help prevent flooding.

“Stand on the curb and use a rake or pitch fork to clear leaves, limbs, and debris from the catch basin. Do not attempt to remove the grid; only clear the debris on top of the grate,” Hadfield says.

“It’s best to inspect catch basins before heavy rain, snow or ice in the forecast. Remove any debris after a storm to keep the catch basin clear,” he adds.

If you see a catch basin filled with debris below the grate, please contact Dogwood Operations Centre at 250-286-4033 to report that particular location. Never attempt to remove the storm drain grate yourself.

Whatever ends up in the catch basin can flow into the storm water system and end up discharged into nearby ditches and streams and ultimately in the ocean.

Cleaning catch basins also removes waste, car fluids, metals, sediments, leaves, sand, dirt and soil, preventing these from reaching nearby water bodies.

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