

# Catch Basin Cleaning Activities Guidance Document

## Catch Basin Cleaning Activities

Catch basins are included in storm sewer system designs in order to remove solids such as gravel, sand, oils, and organic material carried by storm water. Catch basins also contain elevated concentrations of metals (attached to the solids) from street runoff or drainage from industrial, commercial and residential properties. In order to maintain the storm sewer systems effectiveness, catch basins must be periodically cleaned out. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Water Bureau (WB) and Waste and Hazardous Materials Division (WHMD) oversee environmental regulations pertaining to this activity. The Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration ([MIOSHA](#)) within the Department of Labor and Economic Growth oversee confined space entry and other worker health and safety standards.

In the past, the waste generated from the catch basin cleaning activities was typically discharged back into the storm sewer system. This type of discharge is unauthorized per [Part 31, Water Resources Protection \(Part 31\) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended \(NREPA\)](#) and is therefore illegal. The combined solid and liquid waste stream (solid/liquid waste) from cleaning storm sewers systems is legally defined as “liquid industrial waste” pursuant to [Part 121, Liquid Industrial Wastes \(Part 121\) of NREPA](#).

The following are options recommended to properly deal with the waste stream generated from catch basin cleaning activities:

1. Have the waste transported to drying beds to separate the solid/liquid waste. This is usually performed at a publicly owned treatment plant or at a privately owned permitted facility where the liquid portion of the waste stream is separated from the solids and treated.
2. Request permission from the local wastewater treatment plant operator to discharge the combined solid/liquid waste into the sanitary system. Most treatment plants will require pre-treatment prior to the discharge. All applicable local ordinance provisions must be followed.
3. When conducting catch basin maintenance activities where the above options are not available, the following method can be used as long as there are no discharges to surface waters during dry weather conditions.

- Conduct visual inspection to ensure the water in the sump has not been contaminated. If necessary, collect a grab sample of the water and look for signs of contamination such as visible sheen, discoloration, obvious odor, etc. See the EPA [Visual Inspection](#) guidance for more tips. If there is any doubt of the quality of the water, it should be collected into the Vactor truck and treated as waste under Part 121 or [Part 115 Solid Waste Management \(Part 115\) of NREPA](#).
- Using a sump pump, or any other pumping mechanism, remove the majority of water in the sump of the basin without disturbing the solid material below. Do not use pumps connected to the Vactor truck's holding tank.
- The clear water may then be directly discharged to one of the following:
  - Sanitary system (with prior approval from local sewer authority)
  - Curb and gutter
  - Back into the storm sewer system as long as it is contained within the system during dry weather condition to ensure no discharge into surface water
  - Applied to the ground adjacent to the catch basin (evenly distributed at a maximum rate of 250 gallons/acre/year)
- The remaining liquid/solid in the sump should be collected with a Vactor truck and disposed of off-site in accordance with Parts 115 or 121.

The entity whose catch basin is being cleaned is responsible for meeting the generator requirements under Part 121. See the [Liquid Industrial Waste Generator](#) guidance for more information.

The entity transporting the solid/liquid waste must meet the applicable transporter requirements. A local, state, or federal government may use its own vehicle to service catch basins or other parts of the sewer system without being a permitted and registered transporter under the provisions of the [Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, 1998 PA 138, as amended \(HMTA\)](#).

If the local government contracts with a private company to transport the liquids generated from cleaning the catch basins or other parts of the sewer system, that entity must be registered and permitted as a uniform liquid industrial waste transporter under the provisions of HMTA.

The transporter must notify the WHMD about their activity and obtain a site identification number. Follow the instructions and links to the form EQP5150 and online paying option posted at [www.deq.state.mi.us/wdsp](http://www.deq.state.mi.us/wdsp). There is a fee.

A [uniform hazardous waste manifest](#) must accompany the load, or a consolidated manifest may be used per [Operational Memo 121-3](#), when the liquid waste is transported over public roadways by the local government or by a contract transporter. Keep the records at least three years from shipment. The waste transporting portion of the vehicle and/or containers used to

transport the waste must be kept closed except when adding or removing the waste, and the exteriors must be kept free of the liquid waste and residue.

The facility accepting the solid/liquid waste must meet operating requirements:

- They must notify the WHMD that they are operating a liquid industrial waste designated facility, obtain a site identification number, and meet operating requirements under Part 121. This includes practices to prevent unauthorized discharge of the waste, sign manifests, and keep required records. If waste containers are used, they must be kept closed and protected from the weather, fire, physical damage and vandals.
- The discharge of the liquids into the treatment plant that is permitted by the WB must meet the wastewater treatment plant requirements. Any other discharge of the liquids would require a separate DEQ discharge permit.
- The resulting solid waste must be managed under Part 115 requirements. Dispose of the solid waste in a licensed landfill. Contact the landfill authority for their specific disposal requirements, including any tests they require to document the solids are not hazardous or liquid waste. Do not use the solids as fill on local government or private property, or for any other use, unless it meets the conditions of being an inert material according to the solid waste rules [R299.4114 through R299.4118](#). See the [Waste Characterization Guidance](#) for information how to determine if the waste is hazardous or not.

Street sweeping activities are also subject to the above solid waste requirements. Street sweeping involves the use of specialized equipment to remove litter, loose gravel, soil, pet waste, vehicle debris and pollutants, dust, de-icing chemicals, and industrial debris from road surfaces. See the BMPs for [Street Sweeping](#) and [Parking Lot and Street Cleaning](#).

Follow-up Answers Can be Found as Follows:	
Topic	Contact:
Using the solids as fill or other use under Part 115	Duane Roskoskey at 517-335-4712
Part 121 transportation requirements and HMTA	<a href="#">WHMD District Office</a>
Managing waste under Part 31, or general questions regarding this guidance	Mark Fife at 517-241-8993
Confined space entry requirements	MIOSHA Consultation, Education and Training Division at 517-322-1809