

How to maintain your **BURIED DRY WELL**

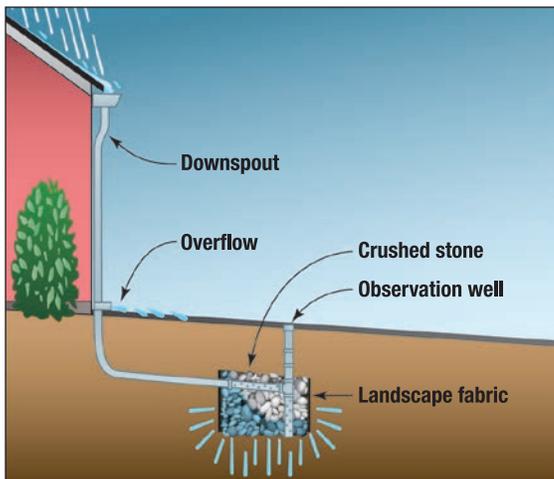
Montgomery County, Maryland

Department of Environmental Protection

Stormwater Facility Maintenance Program

What is a buried dry well?

A buried dry well is a small underground pit filled with stone that collects rainwater from roof gutters and allows it to absorb into the surrounding soil. Underground piping connects the dry well to the roof downspout. Dry wells are common on residential lots, where there may be three or more dry wells on one lot. Since most are buried and covered with grass, people can recognize their location by an observation well cap that is typically at least 20 feet from the house.



Dry well to catch runoff from roof

Buried dry wells need simple maintenance to keep stormwater flowing into them:

Remove Leaves and Tree Debris from Gutters and Downspouts



Clean gutters will help keep debris from clogging your dry well

Actions you can take

Do...

Monthly

- ✓ Inspect your gutters after storms to make sure that rain water properly drains to the dry well.
- ✓ Ensure caps on observation wells are fastened.

Seasonally

- ✓ Remove leaves and tree debris from roof gutters from April through November.
- ✓ To prevent damage to your mower or to the observation well cap, do not mow over the caps.
- ✓ Repair any damage to gutters/downspouts from winter snow or ice.

As needed

- ✓ Inform contractors working on your property of the dry well's location, to prevent accidentally damaging it.
- ✓ Place gutter guards or screens on top of roof downspouts to filter out leaves and sediment before the rainwater reaches the dry well.

Don't...

- ✗ Do not remove a dry well or reconfigure your downspouts to direct water somewhere else.
- ✗ Don't place decks, sheds, or other structures on top of a dry well
- ✗ Don't let children remove the observation well caps.

Why is it important to maintain your buried dry well?

An unmaintained dry well may:

- Cause flooding on other areas of your property if the stormwater is not able to flow into the dry well
- Cause rainwater to pool on the surface and become a breeding place for insects
- Require a complete replacement of the facility, which can be very expensive

By maintaining your dry well, you are doing your part to help the environment and protect your local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

Who is responsible for this maintenance?

As the property owner, YOU are responsible for all maintenance of your dry well.

Can I remove the dry well?

No, you cannot remove any facilities that were part of your building installation. These are permitted structures and DEP maintains a database of these facility locations. DEP may perform a maintenance inspection of your practice if it is a permitted structure. Contact DEP to find out if you have a permitted structure or if you would like to discuss options for modifying your facility.



Dry well downspout overflow for large storms

Troubleshooting

Symptom	Possible Cause	Solution
Standing water around the dry well.	If standing water occurs for more than 48 hours, the dry well or underground piping may be clogged.	The gravel or underground piping may need to be cleaned or replaced. Contact DEP for further guidance.
Rain is immediately flowing into the overflow downspout at the beginning of a storm.	The underground pipe or buried gravel may be clogged with sediment or leaf debris.	Remove any visible blockages in the downspout. Add stones at the overflow downspout to prevent erosion. Contact DEP for further guidance.

To prevent flooding on your property or your neighbor's property, do not reconfigure your downspouts to drain away from a dry well.

What if I need help or have additional questions?

DEP can answer your questions and provide additional guidance about maintaining your dry well. Please e-mail us at Askdep@montgomerycountymd.gov, call the Montgomery County Customer Service Center at 3-1-1, or visit <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/stormwater>.



Residential dry well

Recommended timeframes for typical maintenance

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Remove leaves and debris from gutters				✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	
Maintain pipes and gutters					— — A S N E E D E D — — —							
Check gutters for ice damage	✿	✿	✿								✿	✿