



# How to maintain successful NON-STRUCTURAL DRAINAGE PRACTICES

## What are non-structural drainage practices?

Common non-structural drainage practices include directing rainwater (stormwater) from your roof gutters or driveways to nearby vegetated areas where it can soak into the ground.

Examples include:

- **Rooftop Disconnection:** Directing gutter downspouts to grass or planted areas
- **Non-Rooftop Disconnection:** Driveways or parking lots are sloped so that rainwater flows onto grass or planted areas
- **Sheetflow to Conservation Area:** Directing rainwater to natural planted areas



*Splash blocks can minimize erosion. Be sure they are installed correctly so water drains away from the house.*

## Actions you can take

### Do...

#### Seasonally

- ✓ Rake and remove leaves that block the flow of rainwater.
- ✓ Remove weeds and invasive plants.

#### As needed

- ✓ Remove sediment and debris from areas in and around water flow paths.
- ✓ Inspect your property after storms to make sure that rainwater properly reaches vegetated areas and soaks into the underlying soil.
- ✓ Observe the health and coverage of vegetation to determine whether any plants need to be pruned, trimmed, watered, or replaced.
- ✓ Repair and stabilize eroded areas.

### Don't...

- ✗ Don't direct rain water to other hard surfaces or areas of bare soil.
- ✗ Don't use fertilizer or pesticide.
- ✗ Don't place patios or sheds in a non-structural drainage area.

**Who is responsible for this maintenance?**

**As the property owner, YOU are responsible for maintaining your non-structural practice area.**



*Direct rainwater to vegetated areas.*

**Non-structural drainage practices need simple maintenance to keep stormwater flowing into them, similar to other landscaped areas:**

**Remove debris from gutters and drainage paths.**

You can increase the success of your non-structural practices and save on maintenance costs by performing regular inspections and maintenance to ensure rainwater is soaking into the ground.



Keep the flowpath clear in front of your downspout.



Remove leaves and debris from your gutters.

## Can I remove the practice?

No, you cannot remove any practices that were part of your building installation—these are permitted practices and DEP maintains a database of these 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 practice or if you would like to discuss options for modifying your practice.

## Why is it important to maintain your non-structural drainage area?

An unmaintained non-structural drainage area may:

- Stop sending the rain water to vegetated areas and allow large amounts of water, trash, and pollutants to enter our local streams
- Cause flooding and expensive damage on your property or your neighbor's

By maintaining your non-structural drainage area, you are doing your part to help the environment and protect your local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

## Troubleshooting

Symptom	Possible Cause	Solution
Standing water in the vegetated area	If standing water occurs for more than 48 hours, the area receiving runoff may be clogged or compacted.	The surface of the vegetated area may need to be tilled and replanted.
Erosion	The runoff is moving too fast and/or the vegetation has died.	Stabilize the soil by planting new vegetation. Use rocks or a splash block if needed to slow the water.

## Recommended timeframes for typical maintenance

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
Remove sediment and debris				—	—	—	A	S	N	E	E	D	—	—
Weeding			✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿			
Repair eroded flow paths				—	—	—	A	S	N	E	E	D	—	—

### What if I need help or have additional questions?

DEP can answer your questions and provide additional guidance about maintaining successful non-structural practices. Please e-mail us at [Askdep@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Askdep@montgomerycountymd.gov), call the Montgomery County Customer Service Center at 3-1-1, or visit <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/stormwater>.