

What's There?

There are dozens of ways to attack drainage problems. Of course, it's unlikely that you'll need all of them to protect your home or property. But when finding the solution to your particular home drainage problem, it's best to know your options.

1 Foundation drains

carry stormwater away from your building's foundation. The pipes of these drains are perforated and usually surrounded by gravel. The gravel may be wrapped with a layer of plastic mesh called filter fabric, which holds the soil back but lets water through, preventing the gravel and drain from clogging.

2 Roof drains

unlike foundation drains, are not perforated. They should be connected to an underground system that drains to the City's storm drain system, directly to a water body or to a drywell (See item 9). There's a good reason why roof drains should never be connected to the foundation drain system: if foundation drains become clogged with sticks, leaves and other debris from roof gutters, then water could seep out of their perforations and into your home!

3 Gutters

collect runoff from your home's roof and feed it through downspouts to roof drains.

4 Storm drain pipes

carry rainwater away from your property and into the City system. These pipes are made from a variety of materials, including concrete, aluminum and polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Depending on the material used, these pipes can last as long as 100 years in the ground. Note that many private drain pipes are single-walled corrugated HDPE pipe. This type of pipe has been a problem due to clogging and crushing. PVC pipe is a superior alternative.

5 Catch basins

are basically concrete boxes with grated tops or throat openings. Connected to storm drain pipes, they're designed to catch small rocks, gravel, soil and other debris that might otherwise clog the pipes. Captured debris settles at the bottom of the basin (called a sump), where it can be removed. Because the City has thousands of these basins to maintain, years may pass between cleanings. Homeowners can do their part by helping to contain debris, keeping it out of the basins.

6 Yard inlets

are like catch basins but much smaller and without a sump. You can buy ones made of metal or plastic at hardware stores or make your own out of poured concrete. Remember, anything that enters the inlet goes straight into your drain system and into a stream.

7 Trench drains

are placed wherever stormwater is spread over a wide width such as a driveway. Inside the drain, water flows to one end or the other. Then it flows out through a pipe to the City's storm drain system or some other destination. Like yard inlets, they typically lack a sump.

8 French drains

are perforated pipes surrounded by gravel and filter fabric and connected to a drain system. They can be installed anywhere you need to capture water, not just from around your building's foundation.

9 Drywells

are pits lined with gravel (which is also surrounded by filter fabric). They fill with water, then gradually release it into the ground. Placed at least ten feet away and downhill from the house, drywells are especially useful where connections cannot be made to a drainage system. Some other means of releasing water

