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# Standard Operating Procedures

## Guidance for Sampling of Catch Basin Solids

Prepared for  
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# Contents

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Section	Page
<b>1.0 Purpose.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background.....	1
<b>2.0 Scope and Applicability .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3.0 Equipment and Materials .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4.0 Procedures .....</b>	<b>2</b>
4.1 Documentation.....	2
4.2 Selection of Sampling Method .....	3
4.2.1 Decontamination of Equipment .....	3
4.3 Sample Collection .....	4
4.3.1 Sampling Firm Solids in Catch Basins Without Standing Water .....	4
4.3.2 Sampling Solids in Catch Basins with Standing Water .....	7
<b>5.0 Sample Acceptability .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6.0 Quality Assurance and Quality Control .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7.0 Resources .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Figure</b>	
1 Flow Chart for Selecting the Appropriate Solids Sampler .....	6



# Standard Operating Procedures—Guidance for Sampling of Catch Basin Solids

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## 1.0 Purpose

This document describes Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the collection of environmental solids samples from stormwater catch basins. It provides procedures to be used for assessing potential pathways of contamination from upland sources via stormwater conveyances to receiving waters and sediments. Sampling for environmental investigations requires different methods than those that may be used for determining waste profiles for catch basin solids disposal.

The procedures described here are intended to provide representative samples of catch basin contents. These procedures may be modified for other purposes, such as assessing characteristics of older or newer solids, or because of space or access limitations. All deviations from these SOPs should be noted in field logs and reports.

## 1.1 Background

Catch basins are typically designed to prevent debris, gravels, and soils from fouling storm drain lines, and generally remove larger particles (greater than approximately 1 millimeter in diameter). Unlike specially designed stormwater treatment vaults, catch basins are not intended to remove fine particles or soluble pollutants, and they may only marginally reduce concentrations of contaminants or suspended solids. Catch basin retention efficiencies for suspended solids may be highly variable as functions of basin design, stormwater flow rates, accumulated solids in the sump (a function of cleaning frequency), and solids particle characteristics. Finer particle fractions may be suspended in moving water and carried beyond the catch basin. Because these finer particles are often correlated with organic and inorganic contaminants, special care needs to be taken while collecting catch basin solids samples to ensure that the finer particle fraction is sampled.

## 2.0 Scope and Applicability

The methodologies discussed in these SOPs are intended to provide procedures for collecting representative environmental samples of solids in stormwater catch basins. These SOPs describe specific steps that can be used to ensure representative and comparable data.

Residual material in catch basins is inherently variable. Factors that can affect variability include the characteristics of catch basin structures, the sources of particles, water flow rates and stormwater quality, and the depth and pattern of accumulated solids. In addition, the characteristics of catch basin solids can vary from slurry-like to dry solids. Although variability may be unavoidable, standard methods of collecting and handling samples can improve data quality.

## 3.0 Equipment and Materials

The following equipment should be available for collecting solids samples from catch basins:

- Sampler (generally one type will be selected per catch basin)
  - Stainless steel scoop, trowel, or spoon
  - Bucket (hand) auger
  - Hand corer
  - Petite Ponar® dredge/Van Veen® dredge (0.025 square meter [m<sup>2</sup>])
- Sampling Equipment List
  - Site Sampling and Analysis Plan and/or site files detailing sampling locations, sample collection, and site information
  - Large stainless steel bowl
  - Stainless steel mixing spoon
  - Latex gloves
  - Metal or wooden rod
  - Field data sheets or other documentation
  - Laboratory-supplied sample containers
  - Cooler and ice/chilled blue ice
  - Tape measure
  - Ziploc® bags
  - Field notebook
  - Permanent marking pens
  - Sample labels
  - Chain-of-custody seals
  - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

## 4.0 Procedures

### 4.1 Documentation

Regardless of the equipment to be used, the following general procedures apply:

- Confirm any active catch basin best management practices such as sweeping and cleaning, frequency of activity, etc., if known.
- Document design flow rates (base flow, storm flow) for catch basins, if known.
- Record weather conditions at the time of sampling and last known rainfall event(s).
- Record the location of the catch basin. Include potential solids or contaminant sources such as construction activities, erosion, equipment storage or use, waste or material storage, vehicles, exhaust vents, onsite processes, etc. Site features, distances, flow directions, and gradients should be noted or sketched on a site map.

- Record dimensions of catch basin. Diagram inlet/outlet pipes in the catch basin. The source of inlet flows and destination of outlet flows should be noted, if known.
- Note the presence of water, visible flows, signs of flooding, clogging, debris in or around the catch basin, blocked inlets/outlets, staining, etc.
- Note any apparent evidence of contamination in the catch basin, such as odor, sheen, discoloration, etc., of water or solids.
- Measure the depth of solids in the catch basin and the total depth of the catch basin or sump. Use a decontaminated metal rod or disposable wooden dowel to probe the total depth of the catch basin.
- When recovering samples, record visual observations of:
  - Color
  - Texture, estimates of particle size fractions (as soil classification)
  - Amount and type of debris (Note: any large debris observed in the sample, including sticks, leaves, beverage containers, miscellaneous pieces of plastic and metal, stones and gravel, etc., should be removed, but paint chips and small organic matter should be left in the sample)
- Prepare a diagram of sampling locations within the catch basin, noting any special features such as sumps, inlets and outlets, etc.
- Decontaminate all sampling equipment using documented procedures before and after any sampling activities. Record the decontamination procedures in the field notes.
- Record any deviations from the specified sampling procedures or any obstacles encountered.
- Complete a chain-of-custody form for all samples.

## 4.2 Selection of Sampling Method

Sampling equipment should be matched with the presence and depth of water, solids water content, and catch basin depth. Figure 1 presents a flow chart for determining the appropriate sampling device. Detailed descriptions of each sampling method are presented in Section 4.3.

### 4.2.1 Decontamination of Equipment

Non-disposable equipment that contacts solids samples should be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated before each set of samples is collected. Decontamination should be done in accordance with City of Portland SOP 7.01a<sup>1</sup> or comparable standard. Decontamination solutions should be selected on the basis of the type of analysis being conducted on samples.

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Environmental Services, Environmental Investigations Division, SOP No. 7.01a Draft or subsequent revisions, Decontamination of Sampling Equipment.

## 4.3 Sample Collection

This guidance for sampling catch basins is intended to assess individual catch basins as potential sources of past, present, or future conduits of contamination to Willamette River sediments. Sample collection should therefore incorporate material representative of the total depth and area unless specific alternative sampling objectives are otherwise noted and approved. In some cases, sample collection from discrete depths may be desired based on knowledge of catch basin maintenance and time since last cleaning, activities conducted within the drainage area, spills or releases, and related information.

Standing water in the catch basin, if present, may be pumped off to simplify sample collection. If this procedure is conducted, care must be taken to:

- Pump water from the surface only
- Leave a thin layer of water so that fine materials in the solids are not disturbed
- Pump water slowly so that fine materials are not disturbed
- Dispose of pumped water in the sanitary sewer (pumped water may not be released into the storm system)
- Document all steps taken, the depth and volume of water removed, the point of water disposal, water remaining before sampling, and other relevant factors

### 4.3.1 Sampling Firm Solids in Catch Basins Without Standing Water

Firm solids above the water line are most easily collected using simple soil sampling tools (that is, stainless steel spoon or trowel, or bucket auger). When sampling with a spoon or auger, solids may be moist or wet but should retain their form and structure when handled. (Note: If the sample has a high water content [water drips from solids], another sampling method should be considered to minimize the loss of fine particles in liquid drainage.)

#### 4.3.1.1 Stainless Steel Spoon, Scoop, or Trowel

If necessary, the spoon, scoop, or trowel may be attached to an extension pole in order to reach the bottom of the catch basin, provided a representative sample can be retained on the spoon and recovered intact.

The following procedure defines steps to be taken when sampling dry or moist solids with a stainless steel spoon, scoop, or trowel:

1. Collect the necessary equipment. Clean and decontaminate the equipment, using procedures appropriate for the analytical parameters to be measured.
2. Arrange the appropriate sampling containers.
3. Don a new pair of nitrile or latex gloves.
4. Using a decontaminated stainless steel spoon, scoop, or trowel, collect an equal amount of material from five locations: each corner (or, if round, each compass point) and the center. Material recovered at each point should be a composite of the total depth of accumulated material, unless otherwise specified in the sampling plan.

5. Place sampled solids into a decontaminated stainless steel bowl or tray. Repeat step 4 as necessary in order to obtain the required volume, and mix to homogenize thoroughly using a decontaminated or disposable stainless steel spoon.
6. Collect a suitable portion of the mixed solids with a decontaminated or disposable stainless steel spoon and place into each appropriate sample container.
7. Check that a Teflon® liner is present in caps, if required. Secure the caps tightly. Label sample containers clearly with all appropriate sample information.
8. Place samples in cooler for transport. Refrigeration to 4° Celsius (C) is usually required. Transport time to the laboratory should be as short as possible and must be documented with a chain-of-custody form.
9. Ensure that appropriate field notes, as detailed in the Field Documentation, Section 4.1, have been collected.
10. Complete the chain-of-custody documents.

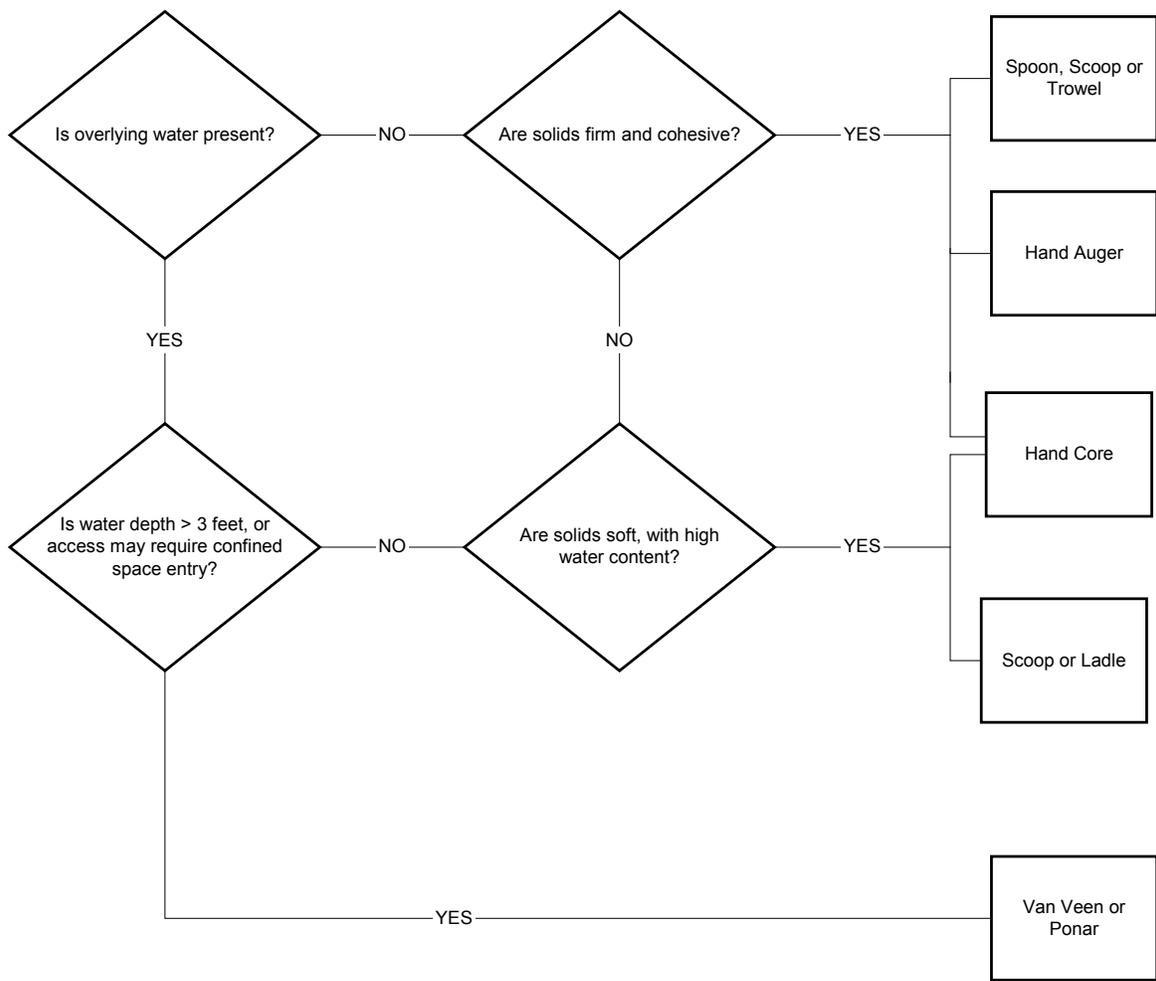
#### **4.3.1.2 Stainless Steel Bucket Auger (Hand Auger)**

Bucket augers are applicable to the same situations and materials as the spoon, scoop, and trowel method described above. Most bucket augers have long handles (> 4 feet), and some can be fitted with extension handles that will allow the collection of solids from deeper catch basins.

The following procedure defines steps to be taken when sampling dry or moist solids with a stainless steel bucket auger:

1. Collect the necessary equipment. Clean and decontaminate the equipment, using procedures appropriate for the analytical parameters to be measured.
2. Arrange the appropriate sampling containers.
3. Don a new pair of nitrile or latex gloves.
4. Advance a thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated bucket auger into catch basin solids in each corner (or, if round, each compass point) and the center of the catch basin. Material recovered at each point should be a composite of the total depth of accumulated material, unless otherwise specified in the sampling plan.
5. Empty the auger into a stainless steel bowl or tray. Repeat step 4 as necessary in order to obtain the required volume and mix to homogenize thoroughly, using a decontaminated or disposable stainless steel spoon.
6. Collect a suitable portion of the mixed solids with a decontaminated or disposable stainless steel spoon and place the sample into each appropriate sample container.

**Figure 1. Flow Chart for Selecting the Appropriate Catch Basin Solids Sampler**



7. Check that a Teflon® liner is present in caps, if required. Secure the caps tightly. Label sample containers clearly with all appropriate sample information.
8. Place samples in cooler for transport. Refrigeration to 4° Celsius (C) is usually required. Transport time to the laboratory should be as short as possible and must be documented with a chain-of-custody form.
9. Ensure that appropriate field notes, as detailed in the Field Documentation, Section 4.1, have been collected.
10. Complete the chain-of-custody documents.

### **4.3.2 Sampling Solids in Catch Basins with Standing Water**

Hand corers or dredge samplers should be used when standing water is present in catch basins to prevent washout of sample material when the sampler is retrieved through the water column. Corers may also be used for dry and moist solids. Some hand corers can be fitted with extension handles that will allow the collection of samples in deeper basins.

#### **4.3.2.1 Hand Corers**

The following procedure defines steps to be taken when sampling saturated solids with a stainless steel hand corer:

1. Collect the necessary equipment. Clean and decontaminate the equipment, using procedures appropriate for the analytical parameters to be measured.
2. Arrange the appropriate sampling containers.
3. Don a new pair of nitrile or latex gloves.
4. Using a thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated corer, advance the sampler into catch basin solids with a smooth, continuous motion, twist corer, and then withdraw it in a single motion.
5. Remove the nosepiece and withdraw the sample into a stainless steel bowl or tray.
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 in each corner (or, if round, each compass point) and the center of the catch basin. Material recovered at each point should be a composite of the total depth of accumulated material, unless otherwise specified in the sampling plan.
7. Mix to homogenize thoroughly, using a decontaminated or disposable stainless steel spoon.
8. Collect a suitable portion of the mixed solids with the decontaminated or disposable stainless steel spoon and place into each appropriate sample container.
9. Check that a Teflon® liner is present in caps, if required. Secure the caps tightly. Label sample containers clearly with all appropriate sample information.
10. Place samples in cooler for transport. Refrigeration to 4° Celsius (C) is usually required. Transport time to the laboratory should be as short as possible and must be documented with a chain-of-custody form.

11. Ensure that appropriate field notes, as detailed in the Field Documentation, Section 4.1, have been collected.
12. Complete the chain-of-custody documents.

#### **4.3.2.2 Clamshell-Type Dredge Samplers**

Clamshell-type dredge samplers like the Petite Poner® and Van Veen® 0.025-m<sup>2</sup> dredge sampler are capable of sampling moist and wet solids, including those below standing water. However, penetration depths usually will not exceed several inches, so it may not be possible to collect a representative sample if the solids layer is greater than several inches. The sampling action of these devices causes agitation currents that may temporarily resuspend some settled solids. This disturbance can be minimized by lowering the sampler slowly and by allowing slow contact with the solids.

Samples collected with clamshell-type dredge samplers should meet the following acceptability criteria in order to ensure that representative samples have been collected (EPA, 2001):

- Solids do not extrude from the upper surface of the sampler.
- Overlying water is present in the sampler (indicating minimal leakage).
- Overlying water is clear and not excessively turbid.
- Desired depth of penetration has been achieved.
- The solids-water interface is intact and relatively flat, with no sign of channeling or sample washout.
- There is no evidence of sample loss.

The following procedure defines steps to be taken when sampling moist, wet, or submerged solids with a dredge sampler:

1. Collect the necessary equipment. Clean and decontaminate the equipment, using procedures appropriate for the analytical parameters to be measured.
2. Arrange the appropriate sampling containers.
3. Don a new pair of nitrile or latex gloves.
4. Using a thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated dredge-type sampler and working on a clean, decontaminated surface, arrange the sampler in the open position, setting the trip bar so that the sampler remains open when lifted from the top.
5. Slowly lower the sampler to a point just above the solids surface.
6. Drop the sampler sharply into the solids, then pull sharply on the line, thus releasing the trip bar and closing the dredge.
7. Raise the sampler and place on a clean surface. Slowly decant or siphon any free liquid through the top of the sampler. Take care to ensure that fines are not lost in the process; if necessary, allow the sampler to sit and the fine particles to settle before decanting or siphoning free liquid.

8. Open the dredge and transfer the solids into a large stainless steel bowl or tray of sufficient size to receive three sample loads.
9. Repeat steps 4 through 8 in diagonal corners (or, if round, two opposite compass points) and the center of the catch basin. Material recovered at each point should be representative of the total depth of solids in the sampling device. If necessary, modify sampling points to correspond to catch basin size or dimensions. Record any deviations in the field notes.
10. Mix to homogenize thoroughly, using a decontaminated or disposable stainless steel spoon.
11. Collect a suitable portion of the mixed solids with a decontaminated or disposable stainless steel spoon and place into each appropriate sample container.
12. Check that a Teflon® liner is present in caps, if required. Secure the caps tightly. Label sample containers clearly with all appropriate sample information.
13. Place samples in cooler for transport. Refrigeration to 4° Celsius (C) is usually required. Transport time to the laboratory should be as short as possible and must be documented with a chain-of-custody form.
14. Ensure that appropriate field notes, as detailed in the Field Documentation, Section 4.1, have been collected.
15. Complete the chain-of-custody documents.

## 5.0 Sample Acceptability

Only solids that are collected correctly with grab or core sampling devices should be used for subsequent physicochemical testing. Acceptability of grabs can be ascertained by noting that the samplers are closed when retrieved, are relatively full of solids (but not overfilled), and do not appear to have lost surficial fines. Core samples are acceptable if the core was inserted vertically in the solids and an adequate depth was sampled without significant loss out the mouth of the corer.

## 6.0 Quality Assurance and Quality Control

A rinsate sample may be appropriate or required when non-disposable sampling equipment is used. The equipment rinsate should be collected between sampling locations and after the device has been decontaminated. The rinsate sample should be analyzed for the same parameters analyzed for in solids.

## 7.0 Resources

1. ASTM. September 1994. Standard Guide for Collection, Storage, Characterization, and Manipulation of Sediment for Toxicological Testing. American Society for Testing and Materials (E 1391-94). West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

2. EPA. 1987. A Compendium of Superfund Field Operations Methods, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Emergency and Remedial Response (EPA/540/P-87/001), Washington, D.C.
3. EPA. 2001. Methods for Collection, Storage, and Manipulation of Sediment for Chemical and Toxicological Analyses: Technical Manual. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water (EPA-823-B-01-002). Washington, D.C. October 2001.