



county of san diego



cistern and underground vault BMPs

Stormwater Structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) are installed on certain properties across the County in order to help prevent pollutants such as trash, fertilizers, pesticides, and sediment from making their way into storm drains and ultimately to our local creeks, rivers, and ocean. Your property is one of hundreds across the County with at least one BMP.

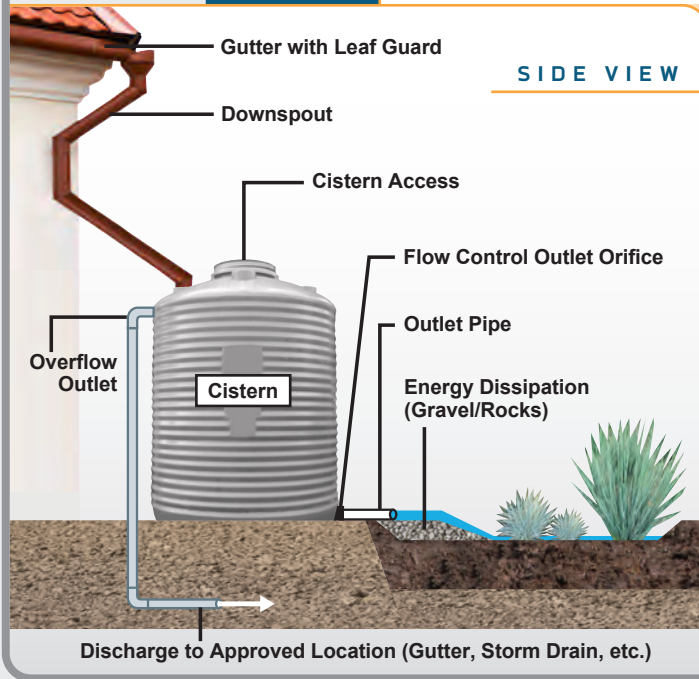
BMPs Keep Our Waterways Clean

Your BMPs are designed to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff generated by your property to the maximum extent practicable. As an owner of one of these properties, County regulations require you to **perform routine inspections and maintenance actions** to ensure that your BMPs are operating effectively.



Our records indicate that you have one cistern or underground vault BMP on your property. To help you maintain this BMP, the **County of San Diego Watershed Protection Program** is providing you with this informational flyer to answer questions you may have about BMPs and how to maintain them.

FIGURE 1 **Cistern**

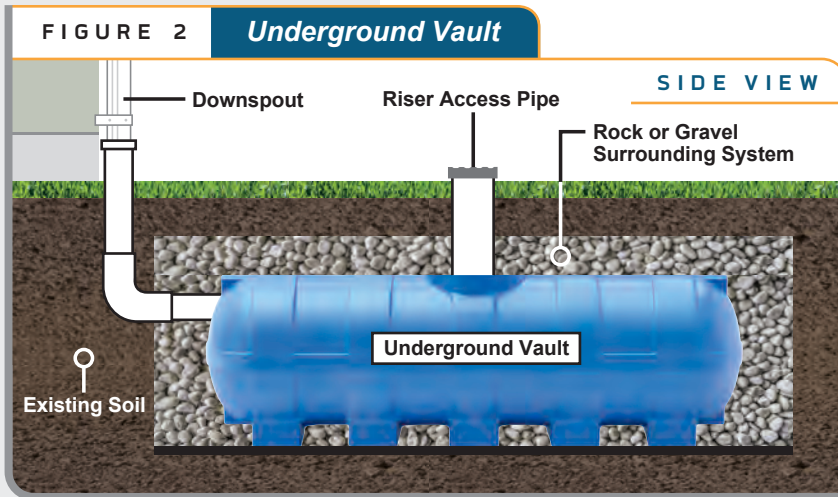


How Your Cistern Works

Unlike natural landscapes capable of absorbing rainwater, impervious surfaces such as rooftops and driveways generate increased amounts of stormwater runoff.

Cisterns address this impact by collecting stormwater runoff and releasing it slowly over time, to mimic natural conditions (see figure 1). This controlled release of runoff protects downstream storm drain infrastructure, and reduces the likelihood of erosive impacts on nearby streams and creeks.





How Your Underground Vault Works

Underground Vaults (see figure 2) provide similar benefits, with the added benefit of capturing pollutants through infiltration. Some amount of runoff captured in an underground vault will infiltrate into the surrounding soil, reducing the amount of pollutants discharged to the nearby storm drain system.

Find And Maintain Your BMP

Your cistern or underground vault BMP is likely located near your property's impervious surfaces, in a natural location for collecting storm-water runoff. Cisterns are often located near downspouts. Underground vaults typically have an access pipe that is visible from the surface.

Once you have found your cistern or underground vault, it is important to maintain it. Keeping your BMPs in working condition helps keep our local waterways clean. Below are a few maintenance tasks to perform:

- **Ensure inlet and outlet points to cisterns and underground vaults are clear of debris, trash, and sediment.**
- **Repair or replace any broken or ineffective mosquito screens.**
- **Underground vaults will have a riser pipe or access point to view the interior vault area (see figure 2). Use this access point to vacuum out any sediment or debris that may be in the system. For larger underground vaults, a vacuum truck is likely necessary.**
- **Manufacturer information is often displayed on BMP access points or manholes. Contact the manufacturer for specific guidance on how to properly maintain your unit.**

Every year the Watershed Protection Program will send you a maintenance verification form for you to complete, sign, and return to the County. This form is used to verify that necessary maintenance has been completed for your BMP.

Failure to conduct needed maintenance of your BMPs may initiate an enforcement investigation or a follow up inspection.

For Questions, Contact Us At: Watershed Protection Program

Phone **1-858-495-5323**

Email **BMP.Program@sdcounty.ca.gov**

Or visit **www.sandiegocounty.gov/stormwater** and click "Maintaining My Structural BMP"



thank you for doing
your part to

protect our
waterways

