

Hello and thank you for signing up to adopt a storm drain in your neighborhood!
By adopting a drain, you're committing to keeping the drain and the area around it clear of leaves, trash, and other debris.

Below you'll find answers to a few questions that we hope will help you get started with the program. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at info@rethinkrunoff.org.

How often do I need to rake, sweep, clean my storm drain?

There's no specific requirement for how often you need to sweep up. Most people clear their drain about twice a month, but be sure to check the drain before and after big rain storms to avoid flooding, during leaf collection season, and when snow begins to melt.

What special equipment / materials do I need?

A rake, broom, dust pan and bucket or yard waste bag should be all you need in terms of equipment. In the event you are interested in adopting a storm drain on a busy street, it is advised that you clear the drain from the curb, wear bright or reflective clothing and use safety cones if you have access to them. Be aware that leaves, if water-logged, can be heavy enough to break a rake!

What do I do with the debris I've collected?

Some sorting is involved. Cans, bottles, and appropriate plastic should be cleaned and recycled. Compostable material like leaves and grass clippings can be composted at home or at a CSWD facility. To find a facility near you that accepts yard waste, visit <https://cswd.net/a-to-z/yard-debris/> Other debris like pet waste and trash should go in the garbage.

Is this a safe activity that I can do with my children or a scout troop?

Adopt-a-Drain is meant to be a safe, family activity, however all participants must be supervised by an adult and you must be an adult to sign the waiver. Please take a moment to review our tips on how to clear your drain and stay safe while doing it at adopt-a-drain.org/safety-information.

Who can adopt a drain?

You must be an adult to adopt a drain and sign the liability waiver, however, young people may work on cleanup with parental consent and adult supervision.

My time commitments have changed, can I unadopt my drain?

While we ask you to commit to clearing your adopted drain for at least one year, we will assume you are continuing to participate in the program until you notify us otherwise.

You can discontinue your participation at any time by logging in to your account and unadopting your drain, or by sending us an email. We'll be happy to help.

What is entailed in estimating the amount of debris I collect? Do I need to use a scale?

In order to help us track the positive impact of Adopt-a-Drain on our watersheds, we are asking you to roughly calculate the amount of debris you collect when you clean your

drain(s). You can do this online by logging into your account, clicking on “Track Impact” and then “Add a Cleaning.” You can estimate the debris you collect in pounds or gallons; our online calculator will translate gallons into pounds for most types of debris. Remember, we just need a rough estimate!

If you find that the record-keeping is getting in the way of the cleaning, don't sweat it! It's much more important that you do the cleanup. But please report in the Adopt-a-Drain tool at least quarterly so we can collect some data and know that you're taking care of your drain.

What happens if there are materials by or in my drain that I don't feel comfortable or able to remove?

Safety First! Never do anything to put yourself at risk. At no time should you remove the grate or clean inside the drain. If you feel your drain needs extra cleaning (i.e. chronic flooding or blockage) please contact your community's public works department. In the uncommon event that you discover a needle at your site, do not pick it up. The Howard Center Safe Recovery Program 802-488-6067 is available to help remove hazards (they are open M-F 9-5). If you notice sharps at your site please also notify us at info@rethinkrunoff.org

How can I promote my efforts to my neighbors and the community?

We're so glad you asked! Put a sign in your yard and be ready to tell neighbors who ask about your participation in the program.

Additional Information

Adopt-a-Drain is funded by Rethink Runoff, an ongoing awareness and public outreach effort to reduce dirt and pollutants in stormwater runoff in the Lake Champlain Basin, managed by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC).

To learn more about stormwater and how it affects our streams, lakes and rivers, visit rethinkrunoff.org.

To learn more about other volunteer opportunities related to clean water, join the Stream Team at rethinkrunoff.org/the-stream-team. We're always looking for volunteers to help with stream clean-ups and other activities throughout the year.

Help keep Lake Champlain clean!

Still have a question? Don't hesitate to contact us. Please email us at info@rethinkrunoff.org