

3.2 INFILTRATION TRENCH

Type of BMP	LID - Infiltration
Treatment Mechanisms	Infiltration, Evapotranspiration (when vegetated), Evaporation
Maximum Drainage Area	10-acres
Other Names	None

Description

Infiltration trenches are shallow excavated areas that are filled with rock material to create a subsurface reservoir layer. The trench is sized to store the design capture volume, V_{BMP} , in the void space between the rocks. Over a period of 72 hours, the stormwater infiltrates through the bottom of the trench into the surrounding soil. Infiltration basins are highly effective in removing all targeted pollutants from stormwater runoff.

Figure 1 shows the components of an infiltration trench. The section shows the reservoir layer and observation well, which is used to monitor water depth. An overflow pipe that is used to bypass flows once the trench fills with stormwater is also shown.

Site Considerations

Location

The use of infiltration trenches may be restricted by concerns over groundwater contamination, soil permeability, and clogging at the site. See the applicable WQMP for any specific feasibility considerations for using infiltration BMPs. Where this BMP is being used, the soil beneath the basin must be thoroughly evaluated in a geotechnical report since the underlying soils are critical to the basin's long term performance. These basins may not be appropriate for the following site conditions:

- Industrial sites or locations where spills of toxic materials may occur.
- Sites with very low soil infiltration rates.
- Sites with high groundwater tables or excessively high soil infiltration rates, where pollutants can affect groundwater quality.
- Sites with unstabilized soil or construction activity upstream.
- On steeply sloping terrain.
- Infiltration trenches located in a fill condition should refer to Appendix A of this Handbook for details on special requirements/restrictions.

This BMP has a flat surface area, so it may be challenging to incorporate into steeply sloping terrain.

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Setbacks

Always consult your geotechnical engineer for site specific recommendations regarding setbacks for infiltration trenches. Recommended setbacks are needed to protect buildings, walls, onsite or nearby wells, streams, and tanks. Setbacks should be considered early in the design process as they affect where infiltration facilities may be placed and how deep they are allowed to be. For instance, depth setbacks can dictate fairly shallow facilities that will have a larger footprint and, in some cases, may make an infiltration trench infeasible. In that instance, another BMP must be selected.

In addition to setbacks recommended by the geotechnical engineer, infiltration trenches must be set back:

- 10 feet from the historic high groundwater mark (measured vertically from the bottom of the trench, as shown in Figure 1)
- 5 feet from bedrock or impermeable surface layer (measured vertically from the bottom of the trench, as shown in Figure 1)
- From all mature tree drip lines as indicated in Figure 1
- 100 feet horizontally from wells, tanks or springs

Setbacks to walls and foundations must be included as part of the Geotechnical Report.

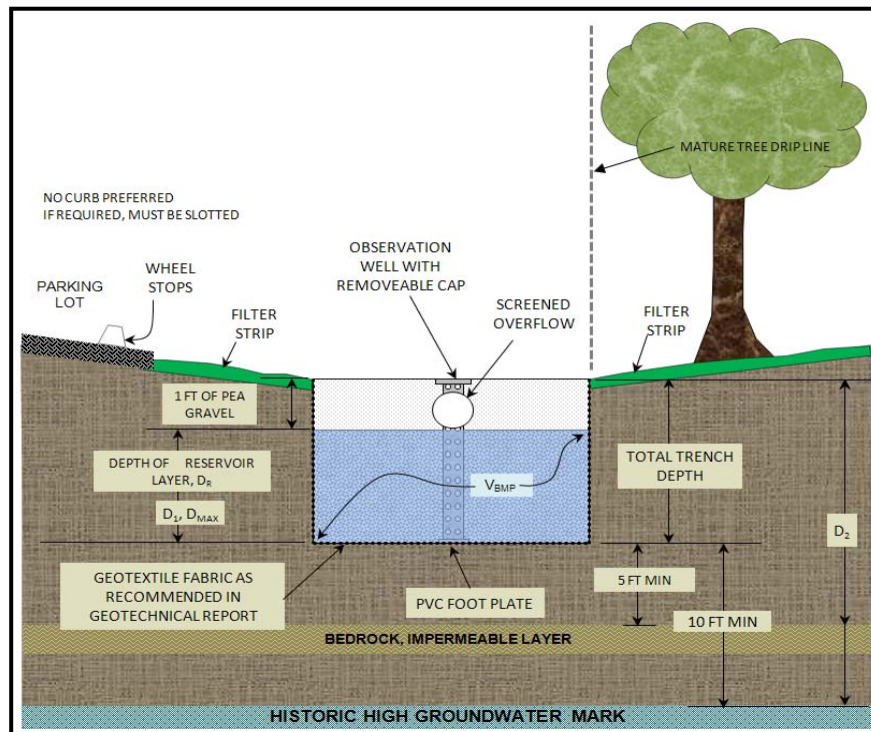


Figure 1 Section View of an Infiltration Trench

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Sediment Control

Infiltration BMPs have the risk of becoming plugged over time. To prevent this, sediment must be removed before stormwater enters the trench. Both sheet and concentrated flow types have requirements that should be considered in the design of an infiltration trench.

When sheet type flows approach the trench along its length (as illustrated in Figure 2), a vegetated filter strip should be placed between the trench

and the upstream drainage area. The filter strip must be a minimum of 5 feet wide and planted with grasses (preferably native) or covered with mulch.

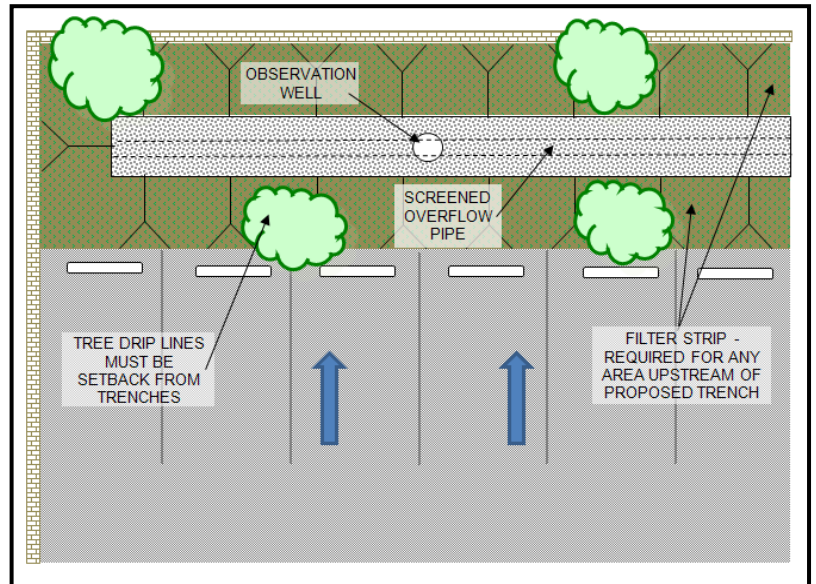


Figure 2 Plan View, Sheet Type Flows

Concentrated flows require a different approach. A 2004 Caltrans BMP Retrofit Report found that flow spreaders recommended in many water quality manuals are ineffective in distributing concentrated flows. As such, concentrated flows should either be directed toward a traditional vegetated swale (as shown on the right side of Figure 3) or to catch basin filters that can remove litter and sediment. Catch basins must discharge runoff as surface flow above the trench; they cannot outlet directly into the reservoir layer of the infiltration trench. If catch basins are used, the short and long term costs of the catch basin filters should be considered.

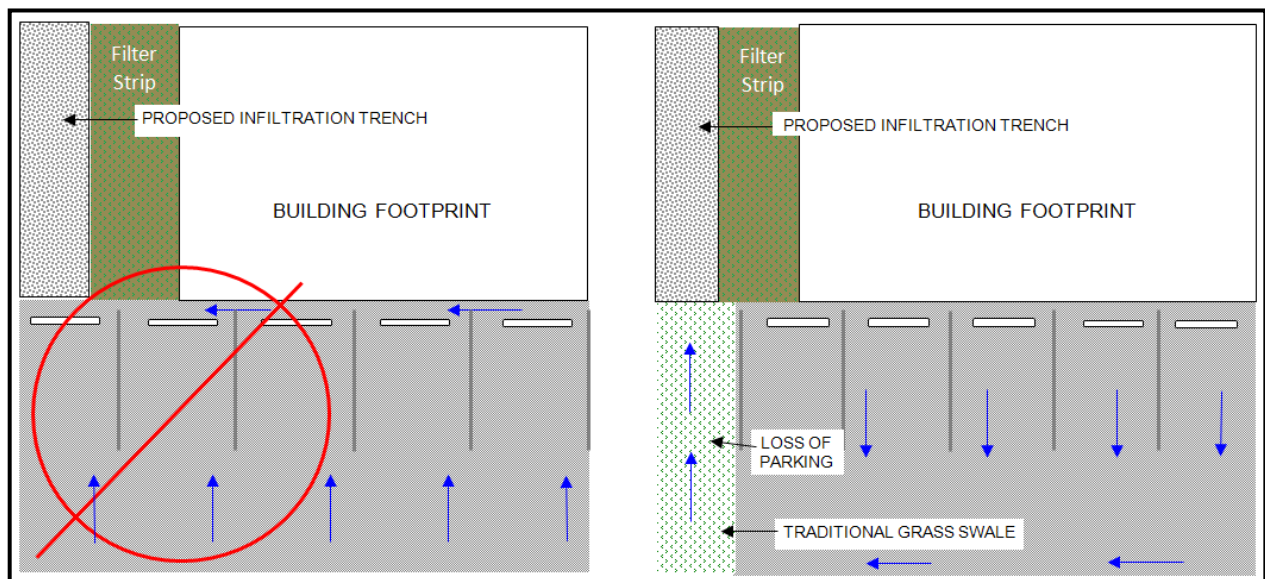


Figure 3 Plan View, Concentrated Flows

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Additional Considerations

Class V Status

In certain circumstances, for example, if an infiltration trench is “deeper than its widest surface dimension,” or includes an assemblage of perforated pipes, drain tiles, or other similar mechanisms intended to distribute fluids below the surface of the ground, it would probably be considered by the EPA to be a Class V injection well. Class V injection wells are subject to regulations and reporting requirements via the Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program. To ensure that infiltration trenches are not considered Class V wells, the design procedure in this manual requires that the trench not be deeper than it is wide.

Geotechnical Report

A geotechnical report must be included for all infiltration trenches. Appendix A of this Handbook entitled “Infiltration Testing Guidelines”, details which types of infiltration tests are acceptable and how many tests or boring logs must be performed. A Geotechnical Report must be submitted in support of all infiltration trenches. Setbacks to walls and foundations must be included in the Geotechnical Report.

Observation Wells

One or more observation wells should be provided. The observation well consists of a vertical section of perforated pipe, 4 to 6 inches in diameter, installed flush with top of trench on a foot plate and have a locking, removable cap.

Overflow

An overflow route is needed to bypass storm flows larger than the V_{BMP} or in the event of clogging. Overflow systems must connect to an acceptable discharge point such as a downstream conveyance system.

Maintenance Access

Normal maintenance of an infiltration trench includes maintenance of the filter strip as well as debris and trash removal from the surface of the trench and filter strip. More substantial maintenance requiring vehicle access may be required every 5 to 10 years. Vehicular access along the length of the swale should be provided to all infiltration trenches. It is preferred that trenches be placed longitudinally along a street or adjacent to a parking lot area. These conditions have high visibility which makes it more likely that the trench will be maintained on a regular basis.

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Inspection and Maintenance

Schedule	Inspection and Maintenance Activity
Every two weeks, or as often as necessary to maintain a pleasant appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain adjacent landscaped areas. Remove clippings from landscape maintenance activities. - Remove trash & debris
3 days after Major Storm Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check for surface ponding. If ponding is only above the trench, remove, wash and replace pea gravel. May be needed every 5-10 years. - Check observation well for ponding. If the trench becomes plugged, remove rock materials. Provide a fresh infiltration surface by excavating an additional 2-4 inches of soil. Replace the rock materials.

Design and Sizing Criteria

Design Parameter	Design Criteria
Design Volume	V_{BMP}
Design Drawdown time	72 hrs
Maximum Tributary Drainage Area	10 acres
Maximum Trench Depth	8.0 ft
Width to Depth Ratio	Width must be greater than depth
Reservoir Rock Material	AASHTO #3 or 57 material or a clean, washed aggregate 1 to 3-in diameter equivalent
Filter Strip Width	Minimum of 5 feet in the direction of flow for all areas draining to trench
Filter Strip Slope	Max slope = 1%
Filter Strip Materials	Mulch or grasses (non-mowed variety preferred)
Historic High Groundwater Mark	10 ft or more below bottom of trench
Bedrock/Impermeable Layer Setback	5 ft or more below bottom of trench
Tree Setbacks	Mature tree drip line must not overhang the trench
Trench Lining Material	As recommended in Geotechnical Report

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Infiltration Trench Design Procedure

1. Enter the area tributary to the trench, maximum drainage area is 10 acres.
2. Enter the Design Volume, V_{BMP} , determined from Section 2.1 of this Handbook.
3. Enter the site infiltration rate, found in the geotechnical report.
4. Enter the factor of safety from Table 1 of Appendix A, Infiltration Testing.
5. Determine the maximum reservoir layer depth, D_{MAX} . The value is obtained by taking the smaller of two depth equations but may never exceed 8 feet. The first depth, D_1 is related to the infiltration rate of the soil. The second depth, D_2 , is related to required setbacks to groundwater, bedrock/impermeable layer. These parameters are shown in Figure 1.

Calculate D_1 .

$$D_1 = \frac{I \left(\frac{\text{in}}{\text{hr}} \right) \times 72 \text{ (hrs)}}{12 \left(\frac{\text{in}}{\text{ft}} \right) \times n/100 \times FS}$$

Where:

- I = site infiltration rate (in/hr), found in the geotechnical report
- FS = factor of safety, refer to Appendix A - Infiltration Testing
- n = porosity of the trench material, 40%

Calculate D_2 . Enter the depth to the seasonal high groundwater and bedrock/impermeable layer measured from the finished grade. The spreadsheet checks the minimum setbacks shown in Figure 1 and selects the smallest value. The equations are listed below for those doing hand calculations.

Minimum Setbacks (includes 1 foot for pea gravel):

- = Depth to historic high groundwater mark - 11 feet
- = Depth to impermeable layer - 6 feet

D_2 is the smaller of the two values.

D_{MAX} is the smaller value of D_1 and D_2 , and must be less than or equal to 8 feet.

6. Enter the proposed reservoir layer depth, D_R . The value must be no greater than D_{MAX} .

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7. Find the required surface area of the trench, A_S . Once D_R is entered, the spreadsheet will calculate the corresponding depth of water and the minimum surface area of the trench.

$$\text{Design } d_W = D_R \times (n/100) \qquad A_S = \frac{V_{BMP}}{\text{Design } d_W}$$

Where:

A_S = minimum area required (ft²)

V_{BMP} = BMP storage volume (ft³)

Design d_W = Depth of water in reservoir layer (ft)

8. Enter the proposed design surface area; it must be greater than the minimum surface area.
9. Calculate the minimum trench width. This is to ensure that EPA's Class V Injection well status is not triggered. The total trench depth (shown in Figure 1) includes the upper foot where the overflow pipe is located. The minimum surface dimension is $D_R + 1$ foot.

Additional Items

The following items detailed in the preceding sections should also be addressed in the design.

- Sediment Control
- Geotechnical Report
- Observation well(s)
- Overflow

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Reference Material

California Stormwater Quality Association. California Stormwater BMP Handbook New Development and Redevelopment. 2003.

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works. Stormwater BMP Best Management Practice Design and Maintenance Manual for Publicly Maintained Storm Drain Systems. Los Angeles, CA, 2009.

LandSaver Stormwater Management System. Tech Sheet - Porosity of Structural Backfill. 2006.

United States Environmental Protection Agency. Office of Water, Washington D.C. Storm Water Technology Fact Sheet Vegetated Swales. 1999.

United States Environmental Protection Agency. Office of Water. Memorandum on Clarification on Which Stormwater Infiltration Practices/technologies Have the Potential to Be Regulated as "Class V" Wells by Underground Injection Control Program. By Linda Boornazian and Steve Heare. Washington D.C., 2008.

Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program. Land Development Guidelines Biofilter Fact Sheet. Ventura, CA, 2001.

Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program. Technical Guidance Manual for Stormwater Quality Control Measures. Ventura, CA, 2002.