

KALAMAZOO CLEANING CREW



Common Questions



The **Adopt-A-Drain Program (AADP)** stakeholders are 1) the participating community or neighborhood, 2) the City of Kalamazoo, Public Services Department as the stormwater utility owner, and 3) third-party persons (non-AADP participants such as people using the sidewalks, bikers, vehicle drivers, etc.). For all your questions and more information call the City of Kalamazoo by dialing **311** (when in the City) or **269-337-8000** (when outside the City) or go to ProtectYourWater.net/Adopt-A-Drain.

Are there liability issues?



Yes, drain clearing is usually done in a road right-of-way where vehicle or bike traffic is occurring. When participating in AADPs, accidents can happen either by the misuse of tools, tripping, trying to access a drain, or a vehicular collision. For these reasons, adult supervision is required for drain clearing.

Liability waivers must address comments and concerns from all stakeholders.

All participants must sign a liability waiver prior to any work being performed. An authorized parent or guardian shall sign a waiver for participants less than 18 years old.

Who should participate?

- Physically healthy residents capable of using tools, bending, lifting, etc.
- Adults
- Children, only if supervised by a participating AADP-trained adult for preparation and active clearing efforts.

What drains can be adopted and accessed for the AADP?

- Low traffic roadways
- Low speed roadways with speed restrictions of less than or equal to 30 miles per hour
- Drains safe enough to be cleared
- Only those drains on local residential roads or those pre-approved by the City of Kalamazoo
- NOTE: For non-residential or non-approved drains, notify the City of Kalamazoo to sweep the roads and/or clear the drain.

How to locate and select your drain for adoption?

[LINK for Enrollment & Map](#) or QR CODE



What are the conditions that would prompt clearing a drain?

When the drain is not working and flooding is occurring due to the accumulation of materials on top of the drain, most likely sediment, leaves, trash, or other items.

Never remove the grate. Clean only the surface of the drain grate and the area around it. Don't attempt to clean without a reflective safety vest or shirt, or highly visible brightly colored clothing: This is paramount for visibility, especially when working near roads with vehicle or bike traffic.

When shouldn't you clear a drain, and instead call the City of Kalamazoo?

- You see that a drain is not working because a sediment fabric or trap was installed as a soil erosion sedimentation control measure,
- You notice the drain is not working because the **inside** of it is noticeably clogged with sediment, leaves, trash, or other items (NEVER attempt to remove a drain grate),

- The weather conditions or high traffic volumes are judged to be unsafe to clean:
 - Warm or hot weather conditions exist contributing to heat stress, breathing issues, etc.,
 - Poor conditions exist due to snow, ice, heavy rainfall events, severe storms flooding, sunken pavement or other factors that may contribute to accidents or injury involving slipping, excessive snow removal, or frostbite,
- You have slippery shoes or inadequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and tools (see below), or
- You notice the pavement is slippery, badly broken up, or the area around the drain is collapsing.

How to prepare for clearing your drain safely?

- Be prepared and know your responsibilities when participating in an AADP.
- Refer to the **BEST PRACTICES 101 GUIDANCE** for more information; go to ProtectYourWater.net/Adopt-A-Drain.
- Understand your AADP and City of Kalamazoo's terms and conditions.
- Sign your liability waiver.
- Complete drain clearing training.
- Dress properly with PPE such as safety shoes, a yellow safety vest or shirt, gloves, trash grabber, etc.
- Have access to tools in good condition that are designed to properly clear a drain such as a broom, rake, trash grabber, shovel, and if needed, orange cones or a dustpan.
- Consider using a wagon to transport the tools to the drain location.
- Be prepared to contain waste materials. Bring a large bucket or yard waste bag.



How to clear your drain & stay safe while doing it?

- ***If you are uncomfortable clearing a drain for any reason, STOP.*** Do not take ANY RISKS.
- If conditions arise during clearing of a drain that make you uncomfortable (i.e., increased traffic, medium to high-speed vehicles passing by, etc.), **STOP**. Do not take ANY RISKS.

- Work with a partner always. Be aware of your surroundings and watch for traffic and hazards.
- Work facing traffic and always have you or your partner watching for third party stakeholders, and roadway traffic on the sidewalks and on nearby properties.
- Have a plan ahead of time with your partner to address unknown conditions or situations that may arise during clearing or transportation of the waste back to your location.
- When working in or near a road, wear a reflective safety vest or shirt, or highly visible brightly colored clothing.
- Consider setting up orange cones and barrier tape around the workspace to make sure you are visible to vehicles.
- When possible, stay out of the road and conduct work from the sidewalk.
- Do not stand or crouch on roads.
- If there is something potentially harmful near the drain, wear work gloves to protect your hands or stop and contact the City. Be careful when picking up leaves and trash. You might want to use a trash grabber to collect debris.
- Do not stick your hands in between the drain's grate while cleaning.
- Never attempt to clear a blockage while water is actively flowing.

How do I collect and dispose of waste materials from clearing the drain?

- Categories of non-hazardous waste generally include sediment/dirt, brown leaves, trash, sticks/twigs, grass and green leaves, salt, snow/ice, pet waste, or other specific items.
- Never handle hazardous, chemical or medical waste. Report these items to your local Public Safety. Dial 911 for assistance if medical wastes, drugs, hazardous substances or other similar items are discovered. Do not touch or pick them up.
- Refer to the **HAZARDOUS WASTE 101 GUIDANCE** for more information; go to ProtectYourWater.net/Adopt-A-Drain.
- Wearing gloves and proper PPE, bag or containerize the waste.
- Transport the waste back to your location.
- Dispose of non-hazardous waste items in your garbage bin/canister or a dumpster (if available).
- Dispose of waste items that can't go into your garbage bin/canister or a dumpster as directed by the AADP pre-approved waste disposal plan.

How do I dispose of the materials removed by clearing?

- Waste collection and disposal needs to be worked out by the stakeholders in advance. Create an AADP pre-approved waste disposal plan ahead of any activities.
- Do not keep waste collected from clearing actions at your residence or location.
- Do not leave wastes by the drain or in the roadway unless there are plans to have it removed immediately.
- Determine what items **can** go into your garbage bin/canister or a dumpster (if available).
- Determine what items **can't** go into your garbage bin/canister or a dumpster (i.e., medical wastes, drugs, hazardous substances, odd or unusual items, or unknown materials). Then decide where these item can be disposed of based on the AADP's **HAZARDOUS WASTE 101 GUIDANCE**.

Properly dispose of all non-hazardous wastes or contact the City of Kalamazoo for further guidance by dialing **311** (when in the City) **or 269-337-8000** (when outside the City) or go to ProtectYourWater.net/Adopt-A-Drain.

Hazardous Waste: If you encounter hazardous waste, a completely clogged drain causing flooding, or issues you cannot safely handle, you should STOP and notify the Public Safety at **911** for emergency services.

How do I document the successful work I've done?

The City's storm drain system discharges (empties) stormwater directly to a creek or river. The City has a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit allowing this. The permit requires documentation of all operation and maintenance ("cleaning") for their storm structures.

As part of the Crew, you must provide the City of Kalamazoo with details of your successful work.

After the cleaning is done, submit the details to the City by using the **AADP inspection entry tool!** It's accessible remotely by all participants.



What data do I need to document?

- Participants names
- Date and time
- ID and location of drain(s)
- Sort data by geographic location to the surface water body it discharges to unless the City of Kalamazoo can do this instead.
- Reason for clearing the drain(s)
- Describe actions taken and degree of success
- Document if actions were not taken, and if the City of Kalamazoo was contacted for additional assistance
- Take photographs
- List the type and quantity of waste materials cleared (use consistent measurements)
- Explain the manner in which the waste materials were disposed of
- Provide other notes as needed