

Description

A wet vault is a vault with a permanent water pool, generally 3 to 5 feet deep. The vault may also have a constricted outlet that causes a temporary rise of the water level (i.e., extended detention) during each storm. This live volume generally drains within 12 to 48 hours after the end of each storm.

California Experience

There are several hundred stormwater treatment facilities in California that use manufactured wet vaults.

Advantages

- Internal baffling and other design features such as bypasses may increase performance over traditional wet vaults and/or reduce the likelihood of resuspension and loss of sediments or floatables during high flows.
- Head loss is modest.

Limitations

- Concern about mosquito breeding in standing water.
- The drainage area served is limited by the capacity of the largest models.
- As the products come in standard sizes, the facilities will be oversized in many cases relative to the design treatment storm, increasing the cost.
- Does not remove dissolved pollutants.
- An export of dissolved pollutants may occur as accumulated organic matter (e.g., leaves) decomposes in the units.

Design and Sizing Guidelines

There are two general configurations of wet vaults currently available, differing with the particular manufacturer.

The first system consists of two standard precast manholes, the size varying to achieve the desired capacity. Stormwater enters the first (primary) manhole where coarse solids are removed. The stormwater flows from the first to the second (storage) manhole, carrying floatables where they are captured and retained. Further sedimentation occurs in this second manhole. The off-line manhole serves as a storage reservoir for floatables as stormwater flows through at flow rates less than the design flow. A device controls the flow into the storage manhole. All flows above the stated treatment flow rate bypass through the device. The bypass prevents resuspension or loss of sediment and floatables that have accumulated in the second manhole. It is important to recognize that as storage of accumulated sediment occurs directly in

Design Considerations

- Hydraulic Capacity
- Sediment Accumulation

Targeted Constituents Removal

Sediment	High
Nutrients	Low/Med
Trash	High
Metals	Low
Bacteria	Low
Oil and Grease	Low/Med
Organics	Low



the operating area of the manholes; treatment efficiency will decline over time given the reduction in treatment volume.

This type of system exists in a number of treatment capacities (flow rate above which bypass occurs), approximately 2.4 - 21.8 cfs. The hydraulic capacities range from 10 to 100 cfs. As such, all stormwater achieves at least partial treatment through essentially all but the most extreme storm flows since some settling occurs in the first manhole. The manufacturer provides information on the total system (water) volume, sediment capacity, and floatable capacities. Footprints of this system ranges from about 200 to 350 ft², with heights of about 11.5 to 13.5 feet (excluding minimum soil cover and access port extenders), depending on the model. Head loss ranges from 5 to 12 inches, depending on the model. Sediment and floatable capacities range up to 201 cf and 150 gallons, respectively. The recommended point of maintenance is when about 25% of the wet vault volume is supplanted by sediment.

Another wet vault design can incorporate internal baffles. Included is an entrance baffle, to reduce the energy of the flow entering the unit. Baffles are also affixed to the floor, to reduce resuspension of settled sediments improve performance. A floating sorbent pad may be placed near the outlet to remove free oil floating on the surface. This design includes both a permanent wet pool, 3 feet in depth, and live storage volume that is filled during each storm. The live storage volume is accomplished by restricting the outlet. The system is modular: that is, it consists of standard units that are added to increase the length, thereby providing the desired volume. Presumably for very large sites there is a practical total length.

Construction/Inspection Considerations

Refer to guidelines provided by the manufacturer.

Performance

A manufactured wet vault can be expected to perform similarly to large catch basins in that its wet volume (dead storage) is similar to that determined by methodology provided in TC-20 for wet ponds. Hence, the engineer should compare the volume of the model he or she intends to select to what the volume of a constructed wet vault would be for the site. Conceivably, manufactured vaults may give better performance than standard catch basins, given the inclusion of design elements that are intended to minimize resuspension. Given this benefit, it could be argued that manufactured wet vaults can be smaller than traditional catch basins to achieve similar performance. However, there are no data indicating the incremental benefit of the particular design elements of each manufactured product. Specific performance information should be obtained from the manufacturer. The designer is cautioned when reviewing bench scale performance information as it may be a poor proxy for prototype scale performance.

Siting Criteria

There are no unique siting criteria. The size of the drainage area that can be served by a manufactured wet vault is directly related to the capacities of the largest models.

Additional Design Guidelines

Refer to guidelines of the manufacturers.

Maintenance

Maintenance consists of the removal of accumulated material with a vacuum and water jetting equipped-truck. It may be necessary to remove and dispose the floatables separately due to the presence of petroleum product. Annual maintenance is typical.

It is important to recognize that as storage of accumulated sediment occurs directly in the operating area of the wet vault, treatment efficiency will decline over time given the reduction in treatment volume. Whether this is significant depends on the design capacity. If the total volume of the wet pool is similar to that determined by the method on TC-20, the effect on performance is minor.

Maintenance Requirements

- Each manufacturer provides storage capacities with respect to sediments and floatables, with recommendations on the frequency of cleaning as a function of the percentage of the volume in the unit that has been filled by these materials.
- The recommended frequency of cleaning differs with the manufacturer, ranging from one to two years. It is prudent to inspect the unit twice during the first wet season of operation, setting the cleaning frequency accordingly.

Cost

Manufacturers provide costs for the units including delivery. Installation costs are generally on the order of 50 to 100% of the manufacturer's cost.

Cost Considerations

- The different geometries of the several manufactured separators suggest that when comparing the costs of these systems to each other, that local conditions (e.g., groundwater levels) may affect the relative cost-effectiveness.
- Subsurface facilities are more expensive to construct than surface facilities of similar size. However, the added cost of construction is in many developments offset by the value of continued use of the land.
- Some of the manufactured vaults may be less expensive to maintain than public domain vaults as the former may be cleaned without the need for confined space entry.
- Subsurface facilities do not require landscaping, reducing maintenance costs accordingly.

References and Sources of Additional Information

Manufacturers' literature.