

Section 68 Subsurface Drains

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4-6801 General

This section covers three types of subsurface drains: underdrains, horizontal drains, and edge drains.

Subsurface drains remove groundwater from natural soils and formations. The drains are intended to intercept groundwater or lower its level before it adversely impacts the highway.

Be alert for indications of problem groundwater, particularly before clearing and during grading. Swamps, bogs, springs, and areas of lush growth are possible indicators of excess groundwater. Carefully inspect fill foundations before starting embankments. As excavation progresses, personnel may encounter standing water or various aquifers near slopes or at the grade.

If problem groundwater is found, it may be necessary to add subsurface drains.

For anything but minor investigation to determine subsurface conditions, request assistance from the district materials engineer or the district geologist.

4-6801A Underdrains

Underdrains consist of perforated pipe placed in permeable material. Single installations, in which a pipe and filter material are placed in a narrow trench, are used at the following locations: along the toe of a cut slope; along an upstream (with respect to groundwater) toe of fill; and across the roadbed at the lower end of a through cut.

Multiple installations of perforated pipe are used in permeable blankets and stabilization trenches. Permeable blankets are placed over the width of a roadbed and may be considered part of the structural section.

Permeable material is enclosed in filter fabric, which prevents the migration of fine material into the permeable material.

Pipes that act to collect groundwater must be perforated or slotted; however, pipes that discharge collected water should not be perforated or slotted.

When feasible, the contractor should locate underdrain systems below the invert of adjacent storm water systems. When working in the presence of high groundwater tables and highly erodible soils, consider using watertight joints in culverts.

4-6801B Horizontal Drains

Horizontal drains are made from 40-mm schedule 80 polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipes. Horizontal drains can be slotted, perforated, or plain. They are placed in holes drilled into aquifers. Normally they are placed in cut slopes or under fills, and their purpose is to reduce the possibility of slides or slipouts.

The extent of groundwater may be determined with exploratory, vertical wells. Where the wells may be kept open, such wells serve as gauges to indicate changes in the

4-6801 General

elevation of the water table. However, in many cases, it is obvious that groundwater requires drainage by horizontal drains because of signs of distress or saturation at the surface. Then, the exploration and installation of drains may occur concurrently. Each newly installed drain adds information needed to solve the problem. For instance, the extent of the aquifer may be discovered or the volume of flow will indicate whether more, or fewer, drains are required.

4-6801C Edge Drains

These are installed beneath a paved shoulder, just out from the edge of the portland cement concrete pavement. Slotted PVC pipe is placed within asphalt-treated or cement-treated permeable material that is partially encapsulated in filter fabric. These drains remove water from the structural section and prevent migration of fine material from the base or subbase to the area beneath the slab.

4-6802 4-6802 Before Work Begins

Before Work Begins

During this preliminary inspection, take the following steps:

- Ensure the contractor requests staking for control of line and grade.
- Verify the receipt and proper distribution of Form CEM-3101, “Notice of Materials to Be Used,” which covers all fabricated materials. (See Section 6-2 “Acceptance of Manufactured Material and Sampling Methods” and Section 6-3 “Field Tests,” of the *Construction Manual* (manual) for details.)
- Upon delivery of the materials, note whether Form TL-0624, “Inspection Release Tag,” identifies the pipe. Note the condition of the pipe and, if applicable, either require repair of minor damage or reject the pipe because of more serious damage.
- Ensure that permeable material is of the class required under the contract.
- Double-check to ensure the use of the proper type and size of materials at each location, and verify the planned quantities for solid and perforated pipe.

4-6802A Underdrains

- Review the locations planned for underdrains to ensure that all areas requiring underdrains have been identified.
- Review Sheet D102 of the *Standard Plans* for underdrain details.

4-6802B Horizontal Drains

- Determine the drain locations and sequence of placement based on plans, exploration work, and observations during excavation. Determine the system by which horizontal drains will be designated and marked, and provide the contractor with this information.
- Plan the placement of collectors and outlets so they are positioned for public safety and ease of maintenance operations.
- Verify planned quantities.

4-6802C Edge Drains

- See Section 4-29, “Treated Permeable Bases,” of this manual for guidelines for the production of treated permeable material.
- Verify planned quantities.
- Review sheets D99A, D99B, D99C, and D99D in the *Standard Plans* for edge drain details.

4-6803 During the Course of Work

During the work, take the following steps:

- Subsurface drains are hidden from view for the most part, so ensure complete as-built records are created. Pictures, plans, elevations, and complete descriptions will enable efficient and more complete maintenance and repair.
- Ensure the contractor conforms to the water pollution control plan in handling any water discharged from subsurface drains.

4-6803A Underdrains

- Immediately before placing the filter fabric, examine the condition of the trench. Require the contractor to remove any loose material and also any sharp objects that may damage the filter fabric.
- Observe the placement of the filter fabric, and ensure that any tears or punctures are repaired as specified.
- Ensure that permeable material is of the class required under the contract.
- In accordance with frequencies shown in Section 6-1, “Sample Types and Frequencies,” of this manual, test the permeable material for all specified attributes.
- Initially, more frequent testing may be advisable if any indication exists that segregation or contamination is occurring during handling and placing.
- Require the contractor to place pipe in the manner specified in Section 68-1.03, “Installing Underdrains,” in the *Standard Specifications*.
- Terminal cleanouts and intermediate risers are vulnerable to damage throughout the contract’s life. Before recommending contract acceptance, ensure they are in good condition.

4-6803B Horizontal Drains

- Require the contractor to determine the elevation of drilled holes at specified intervals. Record these for inclusion in the permanent records.
- Determine the length of nonperforated pipe to be placed at the drain mouths. Use the minimum specified length when the aquifer extends to the surface. Require outlet pipes to be connected to the collector system.
- Require the space between the drilled hole and the pipe to be tightly plugged with earth as specified.
- Keep a boring log of material types encountered during drilling, and also keep a log of production rates.
- Each drain must be identified by a brass plate bearing an assigned number or other label. Collect data about the drain’s location, outlet elevation, grade, lengths of drilled hole and casing, plan of system, and flow. Furnish this data, including the identification information, to the Office of Geotechnical Services in the Division of Engineering Services.
- For the most part, horizontal drains are hidden from view, so ensure complete as-built records are created. Pictures, plans, elevations, and complete descriptions will enable efficient and more complete maintenance and repair.

4-6803 During the Course of Work

4-6803C Edge Drains

- Inspect trench excavation for proper location, alignment, and cross-sectional dimensions. Require the contractor to remove any loose material and also any sharp objects that may damage the filter fabric during installation.
- Observe the installation of the filter fabric. Require that it be free of wrinkles and that any tears or punctures are repaired as specified.
- Verify that the contractor meets the requirements for atmospheric temperature and mix temperatures for cement-treated and asphalt-treated permeable materials.
- Cement-treated permeable material delivered in truck mixers may have a tendency to segregate at the end of the load. When the material is obviously segregated, do not permit its use. An excess of fines and water can enter and plug the slotted pipe. Moreover, an overly coarse aggregate grading may not bond and will be unstable.
- Require that the curing of cement-treated permeable material meets specifications.
- Require that edge drains, vents, and cleanout pipes be tested, as required by the specifications, for obstructions. Animal guards, if required, should be positioned immediately after the placement of the drains. Pipes may also be damaged by asphalt-treated material that is too hot or may be plugged by excessive free mortar in cement-treated permeable material. Observe all testing, and record that it was done. Require the replacement of any pipe that the flushing nozzle cannot penetrate.
- For the most part, edge drains are hidden from view, so ensure complete as-built records are created. Pictures, plans, elevations, and complete descriptions will enable efficient and more complete maintenance and repair.

4-6804 4-6804 Measurement and Payment

Measurement and Payment

Measurement and payment must conform to the special provisions, *Standard Specifications*, or both.

Underdrains, horizontal drains, and edge drains each have different measurement and payment clauses.

For underdrains and edge drains, see Section 4-65, “Reinforced Concrete Pipe,” in this manual for a discussion of slope length designated by the engineer. Note that in sections, 68-1 “Underdrains,” and 68-3, “Edge Drains,” of the *Standard Specifications* the actual length designated is to be paid for, and no provision exists for paying for additional length due to cutoff.

As horizontal drain installation progresses, measure the length of drain placed so that a final quantity can be determined.