Drain Inserts

Description
Drain inserts are manufactured filters or fabric placed in a drop inlet to remove sediment and debris. There are a multitude of inserts of various shapes and configurations, typically falling into one of three different groups: socks, boxes, and trays. The sock consists of a fabric, usually constructed of polypropylene. The fabric may be attached to a frame or the grate of the inlet holds the sock. Socks are meant for vertical (drop) inlets. Boxes are constructed of plastic or wire mesh. Typically a polypropylene “bag” is placed in the wire mesh box. The bag takes the form of the box. Most box products are one box; that is, the setting area and filtration through media occur in the same box. Some products consist of one or more trays or mesh grates. The trays may hold different types of media. Filtration media vary by manufacturer. Types include polypropylene, porous polymer, treated cellulose, and activated carbon.

California Experience
The number of installations is unknown but likely exceeds a thousand. Some users have reported that these systems require considerable maintenance to prevent plugging and bypass.

Advantages
- Does not require additional space as inserts as the drain inlets are already a component of the standard drainage systems.
- Easy access for inspection and maintenance.
- As there is no standing water, there is little concern for mosquito breeding.
- A relatively inexpensive retrofit option.

Limitations
Performance is likely significantly less than treatment systems that are located at the end of the drainage system such as ponds and vaults. Usually not suitable for large areas or areas with trash or leaves than can plug the insert.

Design and Sizing Guidelines
Refer to manufacturer’s guidelines. Drain inserts come in many configurations but can be placed into three general groups: socks, boxes, and trays. The sock consists of a fabric, usually constructed of polypropylene. The fabric may be attached to a frame or the grate of the inlet holds the sock. Socks are meant for vertical (drop) inlets. Boxes are constructed of plastic or wire mesh. Typically a polypropylene “bag” is placed in the wire mesh box. The bag takes the form of the box. Most box products are
one box; that is, the setting area and filtration through media occurs in the same box. One manufacturer has a double-box. Stormwater enters the first box where setting occurs. The stormwater flows into the second box where the filter media is located. Some products consist of one or more trays or mesh grates. The trays can hold different types of media. Filtration media vary with the manufacturer: types include polypropylene, porous polymer, treated cellulose, and activated carbon.

**Construction/Inspection Considerations**
Be certain that installation is done in a manner that makes certain that the stormwater enters the unit and does not leak around the perimeter. Leakage between the frame of the insert and the frame of the drain inlet can easily occur with vertical (drop) inlets.

**Performance**
Few products have performance data collected under field conditions.

**Siting Criteria**
It is recommended that inserts be used only for retrofit situations or as pretreatment where other treatment BMPs presented in this section are used.

**Additional Design Guidelines**
Follow guidelines provided by individual manufacturers.

**Maintenance**
Likely require frequent maintenance, on the order of several times per year.

**Cost**
- The initial cost of individual inserts ranges from less than $100 to about $2,000. The cost of using multiple units in curb inlet drains varies with the size of the inlet.
- The low cost of inserts may tend to favor the use of these systems over other, more effective treatment BMPs. However, the low cost of each unit may be offset by the number of units that are required, more frequent maintenance, and the shorter structural life (and therefore replacement).

**References and Sources of Additional Information**

Interagency Catch Basin Insert Committee, Evaluation of Commercially-Available Catch Basin Inserts for the Treatment of Stormwater Runoff from Developed Sites, 1995

Larry Walker Associates, June 1998, NDMP Inlet/In-Line Control Measure Study Report

Manufacturers literature
Santa Monica (City), Santa Monica Bay Municipal Stormwater/Urban Runoff Project - Evaluation of Potential Catch basin Retrofits, Woodward Clyde, September 24, 1998