



French Drain Inspection Check List

Aqviz Waterproofing (Aqviz.com)

Page 1 of 2

1. Preliminary Safety and Setup

Wear gloves, work boots, and safety glasses
Carry a flashlight, small shovel, water hose, and camera
Use a moisture meter for nearby wall or soil testing
Notify property owner before digging or testing near foundation
Turn off nearby irrigation before the inspection

Note

	
	
	
	
	

2. Surface Clues and Water Accumulation

Inspect signs of standing water near walls or low spots
Check for soggy soil, mud patches, or slow-draining areas after rainfall
Look for grass discoloration, erosion, or pooling near suspected drain line
Downspouts or sump discharge terminate near the French drain system
Check sidewalk edges, driveway joints, or foundation lines for water stains

	
	
	
	
	

3. Drain Inlet Inspection (Where Water Enters the System)

Locate surface grates or catch basins and inspect for debris buildup
Ensure inlet points are not buried under mulch, leaves, or landscaping
Inspect slope to confirm water naturally flows toward the drain
Test water flow into the inlet using a hose for draining or backup
Note if water bypasses inlet and runs toward the foundation

	
	
	
	
	

4. Drainage Trench and Pipe Alignment

Trace path of French drain based on inlet and outlet position
Check soil along the trench line for wetness or saturation
Look for sunken soil or trench collapse
Use inspection camera (if available) to assess interior of perforated pipe
Note the drain system slope (minimum 1% grade recommended)

	
	
	
	
	

5. Pipe Condition and Cleanout Access

Locate accessible cleanout caps or junction boxes
Inspect for sediment buildup, root intrusion, or blockage at the cleanout
Check if pipe is clogged by flushing water
Inspect pipe material (PVC, corrugated, or perforated)
Confirm presence of filter fabric around the pipe to prevent soil intrusion

	
	
	
	
	

Need More Info?

- Read more about **French Drains** - <https://aqviz.com/basement/french-drains/>
- Read more about **Basement Waterproofing** - <https://aqviz.com/basement/waterproofing/>
- Read more about **French Drain Types** - <https://aqviz.com/basement/french-drains/types/>



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(Aqviz.com) Page 2 of 2

6. Gravel Bed and Filtration System

Check exposed gravel sections for silt, mud, or compacted soil
Ensure gravel extends around the pipe and is not filled with organic debris
Note missing or degraded landscape fabric above gravel bed
Test water percolation through gravel
Look for signs of plant roots invading gravel bed

Note

	
	
	
	
	

7. Interior French Drain Inspection (Basement or Crawl Space Systems)

Inspect wall-floor joint where drain is installed for seepage or staining
Check for rust, efflorescence, or mold near the drain channel
Confirm water enters the sump pit or outlet channel as designed
Check if concrete over trench is cracked, uneven, or spalling
Check signs of water bypassing the French drain and rising the floor

	
	
	
	
	

8. Discharge Outlet and Termination Point

Locate the outlet pipe where water is discharged away from the structure
Ensure outlet pipe is not buried, blocked, or covered with sod or soil
Inspect for erosion or water staining near the outlet
Confirm water exits during a hose or rainfall test
Outlet discharges at least 6-10 feet away from foundation or dry well

	
	
	
	
	

9. Signs of Failure or Poor Installation

Frequent water accumulation near home despite drain presence
Visible mold, water stains, or dampness near French drain path
Sediment or roots visible in cleanouts or discharge pipe
Improper slope causing reverse flow or pooling inside pipe
Drainage system not connected to sump or lacks proper discharge route

	
	
	
	
	

10. Recommendations and Next Steps

Clean out clogged inlets, cleanouts, or outlet pipes
Flush or jet French drain if slow water flow is detected
Replace crushed or collapsed sections of pipe if excavation is needed
Install or replace filter fabric and gravel in clogged trench sections
Reroute downspouts or extend sump pump discharge
Schedule full inspection if signs of wall seepage or flooding persist

	
	
	
	
	
	

Need More Info?

- Read more about **How to Unclog French Drain** - <https://aqviz.com/basement/french-drains/how-to-unclog/>
- Read more about **French Drain Maintenance** - <https://aqviz.com/basement/french-drains/maintenance/>
- Read more about **Basement flooding** - <https://aqviz.com/basement/flooding/>

