

The type of ground cover at a given site greatly affects the volume of runoff. Undisturbed natural areas, such as woods and brush, have high infiltration potentials whereas impervious surfaces, such as parking lots and roofs, will not infiltrate runoff at all. The ground surface can vary extensively, particularly in urban areas, and Table 3-5 lists appropriate curve numbers for most urban land use types according to hydrologic soil group. Land use maps, site plans, and field reconnaissance are all effective methods for determining the ground cover.

**Table 3-5**  
Runoff curve numbers in urban areas for the SCS method (SCS, 1986)

Cover Description	Curve Numbers for Hydrologic Soil Group			
	A	B	C	D
<i>Fully developed urban areas</i>				
Open Space (lawns, parks, golf courses, etc.)				
Poor condition (< 50% grass cover)	68	79	86	89
Fair condition (50% to 75% grass cover)	49	69	79	84
Good condition (> 75% grass cover)	39	61	74	80
<i>Impervious areas:</i>				
Paved parking lots, roofs, driveways, etc.	98	98	98	98
Streets and roads:				
Paved; curbs and storm sewers	98	98	98	98
Paved; open ditches	83	89	98	98
Gravel	76	85	89	91
Dirt	72	82	85	88
<i>Developing urban areas</i>				
Newly graded areas	77	86	91	94
Pasture (< 50% ground cover or heavily grazed)	68	79	86	89
Pasture (50% to 75% ground cover or not heavily grazed)	49	69	79	84
Pasture (>75% ground cover or lightly grazed)	39	61	74	80
Meadow - continuous grass, protected from grazing and generally mowed for hay	30	58	71	78
Brush (< 50% ground cover)	48	67	77	83
Brush (50% to 75% ground cover)	35	56	70	77
Brush (>75% ground cover)	30	48	65	73
Woods (Forest litter, small trees, and brush destroyed by heavy grazing or regular burning)	45	66	77	83
Woods (Woods are grazed but not burned, and some forest litter covers the soil)	36	60	73	79
Woods (Woods are protected from grazing, and litter and brush adequately cover the soil)	30	55	70	77