Sump pump maintenance

A schedule, a quick test and a log. Your pump's manual comes first: some call for different checks or a different schedule.

Below the Sill

Pump model and serial

Installed (date)

Backup type and battery date

Where it discharges outside

Breaker or outlet

Service phone

DON'T TEST IT YOURSELF IF

- ! A power cord is damaged, or there's water near outlets or wiring
- ! The pit is flooded or you'd have to reach into it

Never put your hands in the pit or touch anything that's powered. Call a professional.

EVERY MONTH IN THE RAINY SEASON

- ☐ The alarm works
- ☐ No unusual water in the pit
- ☐ The float has room to move
- ☐ Water discharges outside, away from the house
- ☐ No leaks or new noises
- ☐ Look again after a big storm

EVERY THREE MONTHS

- ☐ Test the pump with water, if the manual allows it
- ☐ Check the check valve, lid, visible pipe and outside outlet
- ☐ Test the backup pump and check the battery

ONCE A YEAR

- ☐ Clean the pit and inlet screen (power off)
- ☐ Test the main pump and the backup
- ☐ Check the connections
- ☐ Note the pump's age and any change in how it runs

QUICK TEST

1. Check that the outside outlet isn't blocked
2. Look at the lid, float and pit without reaching in
3. Pour clean water into the pit until the float rises
4. The pump starts, empties the pit and shuts off on its own
5. Listen for a banging check valve, vibration or rapid on-off
6. Test the backup and alarms per their instructions
7. Put every switch back where it was

If the pump doesn't start or doesn't empty the pit, call a technician.

PLAN A REPLACEMENT WHEN

- ☐ It makes a new noise or starts at random
- ☐ It moves less water or shows corrosion
- ☐ It's about 7 to 10 years old and your basement tends to flood

LOG

Date	Main pump OK?	Backup OK?	Alarm	What you noticed	Action taken

By Robert Stulpt · belowthesill.com/sump-pumps/maintenance/ · Test steps follow InterNACHI's Sump Pump Operation and Inspection Guide. The 7- to 10-year figure is a planning estimate, not a promise: pumps can fail earlier or last longer.