

Vehicle and Equipment Washing

Best Management Practices Fact Sheet

Goal/Purpose:

Short Term

Minimize or prevent the discharge of pollutants into storm drains from vehicle and equipment cleaning operations by discharging to sanitary sewer, containing wash water for offsite disposal or directing wash water (without cleaners) to landscape areas.

Long Term

Conduct all washing and steam cleaning operations under cover with water treated prior to release to the sanitary sewer.

This system for washing vehicles has drains in the center and a perimeter drain at the bottom of the ramp to catch any wash water. The drains must be covered when not in use to prevent rainwater from entering the sanitary sewer.

Selection of Best Management Practice Activities

To comply with the city's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP), specific best management practices (BMPs) must be implemented at municipal facilities and should be selected or developed on a case-by-case basis as required.

Activity

1. Consider using an off-site commercial washing or cleaning business.
2. Use a designated wash area that is paved and bermed or sloped such that wash water is contained and directed to a sump with a connection to the sanitary sewer. The washing area should either be covered or have a sump switch to prevent rainwater from entering the sanitary sewer line. The best location for a wash area prevents storm water runoff from contacting the wash pad surface. Without cover, eventually surfactants and wastes from the cleaning process will become mobilized and contribute to the pollution of rivers, streams, lakes, and groundwater. Always contact the sanitary district for discharge requirements prior to discharging wash water into the sanitary sewer.
3. Use a designated wash area that is paved and protected by permanent or movable berms, dikes, and mats. Contain the wash water and vacuumed up or otherwise collect for disposal in the sanitary sewer. Wash water must not leave the property. If the driveway is an avenue for runoff, it must be bermed to contain the wash water. Always contact the sanitary district for the discharge requirements prior to discharging wash water into the sanitary sewer.
4. Conduct rinsing on an unpaved area such as lawn or gravel with just water. Keep washing activities away from storm drains or water conveyances so that the rinse water will infiltrate into the ground and not flow to the storm drains or creeks.
5. Conduct all steam cleaning activities indoors or on a concrete pad that is bermed or sloped to contain the wastewater with a connection to an oil/water separator and sewer.

The best location for a steam cleaning area would preclude storm water from running over the pad, flushing the cleaning products and other pollutants into the storm water runoff. Always contact the sanitary district for the discharge requirements prior to discharging wash water into the sanitary sewer.

General

6. Use phosphate-free, nontoxic, biodegradable soap. All soaps, including those labeled “biodegradable” do not belong in rivers, streams, lakes, or groundwater. They are harmful to aquatic life and should never be misconstrued as safe for direct disposal to surface waters (i.e., storm drains). A wastewater treatment plant handles all soaps, detergents, and cleaning agents.
7. Continue to evaluate safer alternative products for any job that uses toxic or hazardous products. When available and cost effective, these products should be used.
8. Consider using a wash water-recycling system.
9. Use as little water as possible during washing.
10. Promptly clean up any spill of liquid or solid wastes. Do not hose down an area to clean up a spill unless the liquid will be completely contained, cleaned up, and disposed of in the sanitary sewer or off-site as appropriate for the waste type. Do not discharge any liquid to storm drains, landscape, or pavement.
11. Conduct regular inspections of the oil/water separators or holding sumps to ensure proper operation and compliance with the local sanitation discharge limitations.
12. Do not wash private vehicles on municipal property.
13. In the field, vehicles and equipment shall only be rinsed with clean water to wash off dirt and mud. This rinsing shall take place in a location to minimize any impacts to surface runoff such as an unpaved areas away from creeks and other storm water conveyances. No soaps or cleaners will be used unless the wash water can be disposed of in a sanitary sewer.

Employee Training

Staff training may include regular tailgate sessions at those facilities that load and unload significant amounts of chemicals or raw materials. Staff training may include regular tailgate sessions at those facilities that use chemicals. Tailgate sessions should provide information on the selected storm water BMPs and methods for preventing discharge of pollutants into the storm drain system. Encourage employees to suggest modifications for existing BMPs and to create new BMPs; their suggestions will likely reduce labor and increase storm water runoff protection. If the above-suggested BMPs require some modification to work for you or do not cover some aspect of your operations or facility, call the city storm water representative at (XXX) XXX-XXXX for assistance.

Storm water BMP training may be incorporated with other training sessions such as safety training. Records of the training sessions should be kept for at least three years. These records should include who conducted the training, who attended, subjects discussed, and the date(s) of the training.

For additional information on this and other BMPs or the city's responsibilities under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II federal regulations for storm water discharges, see <http://www.XXXX.XXXX> or contact the city storm water representative at (XXX) XXX-XXXX for assistance.