

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT CLEANING

OVERVIEW

Wash water from vehicle and equipment cleaning activities performed outdoors or in areas where wash water flows onto the ground can contribute toxic hydrocarbons and other organic compounds, oils and greases, nutrients, trash, metals, sediments, phosphates, heavy metals, and suspended solids to stormwater runoff. To reduce or minimize the discharge of pollutants to stormwater during vehicle and equipment cleaning, please review and apply the following approaches and requirements below.

APPROACH

Pollution Prevention

- If possible, use properly maintained off-site commercial washing and steam cleaning businesses whenever possible. These businesses are better equipped to handle and properly dispose of the wash waters.
- Good housekeeping practices can minimize the risk of contamination from wash water discharges.

General-

- Use biodegradable, phosphate-free detergents for washing vehicles as appropriate.
- Mark the area clearly as a wash area.
- Post sign' stating that only washing is allowed in wash area and that discharges to the storm drain are prohibited.
- Provide a trash container in wash area.
- Do not wash near storm drain inlet locations to avoid discharges to the storm drain system.
- Emphasize the connection between the storm drain system and runoff and help reinforce that vehicle/equipment washing activities can have an effect on local water quality. This can be accomplished through storm drain stenciling programs.

Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning-

- Design wash areas to properly collect and dispose of wash water when engine cleaning is conducted and when chemical additives, solvents, or degreasers are used. This may include installation of sumps or drain lines to collect wash water or construction of a berm around the designated area and grading of the area to collect wash water as well as prevent stormwater run-on.
- Consider washing vehicles and equipment inside the building if washing/cleaning must occur on-site. This will help to control the targeted constituents by directing them to the sanitary sewer.

- If washing must occur on-site and outdoors:
 - Use designated paved wash areas. Designated wash areas must be well marked with signs indicating where and how washing must be done. This area must be covered or bermed to collect the wash water and graded to direct the wash water to a treatment or disposal facility.
 - Oil changes and other engine maintenance cannot be conducted in the designated washing area. Perform these activities in a place designated for such activities.
 - Cover the wash area when not in use to prevent contact with rain water.
- Use hoses with nozzles that automatically turn off when left unattended.
- Perform pressure cleaning and steam cleaning off-site to avoid generating runoff with high pollutant concentrations. If done on-site, no pressure cleaning and steam cleaning should be done in areas designated as wellhead protection areas for public water supply.

Disposal-

- Consider filtering and recycling wash water.
- Discharge vehicle/equipment wash water to (1) the sanitary sewer, a holding tank, or process treatment system or (2) an enclosed recycling system.

Training

- Train employees on proper cleaning and wash water disposal procedures and conduct "refresher" courses on a regular basis.
- Train staff on proper maintenance measures for the wash area.
- Train employees and contractors on proper spill containment and cleanup. The employee should have the tools and knowledge to immediately begin cleaning up a spill if one should occur.

Spill Response and Prevention

- Please refer to the Spill Prevention, Control & Cleanup section.
- Have spill cleanup materials readily available and in a known location.
- Cleanup spills immediately and use dry methods if possible.
- Properly dispose of spill cleanup material.

REQUIREMENTS

Maintenance

- Berm repair and patching, as necessary.
- Sweep washing areas frequently to remove solid debris.
- Inspect and maintain sumps, oil/water separators, and on-site treatment/recycling units.

MEASURABLE GOALS

- #of staff trained or read procedure annually.

REFERENCES

GLRC Municipal BMP Handbook OR www.mywatersheds.org