

Mobile Cleaning – Transportation Related



Photo Credit: Geoff Brosseau

Description

This category includes businesses that both conduct their own mobile cleaning or “power washing” activities and those that are hired as contractors to conduct these activities. Mobile cleaning differs from other cleaning activities in that the cleaning is not conducted in a dedicated, fixed location with a wastewater capture and treatment system connected to the sanitary sewer system. This category includes mobile cleaning or power washing of transportation-related objects or areas:

- Mobile cleaning or power washing of vehicle exteriors
- Engine or equipment degreasing
- Acid cleaning of unpainted trucks or containers
- Auto detailing
- Car lot rinsing

Information specific to: food service business-related cleaning, surface cleaning, or cleaning of amenities is provided in other guide sheets.

Pollutant Sources

The following are sources of pollutants:

- Using harmful cleaning chemicals – including soaps as well as solvents
- Removing toxic materials such as oil, antifreeze, and grease
- Generating polluted wash water from cleaning activities

Pollutants can include:

- Heavy metals (copper, lead, nickel, and zinc)
- Hydrocarbons (oil and grease, PAHs)
- Toxic chemicals (solvents, chlorinated compounds, glycols)



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- Acids and alkalis

Approach

The potential for generating stormwater pollution as part of these activities requires extra attention because by definition these activities are conducted outside with water (and sometimes chemicals) for the purpose of removing residues, dirt, and debris. Make stormwater pollution prevention BMPs a part of standard operating procedures and the employee training program. Provide employee education materials in the first language of employees, as necessary.

Use the following four-step approach:

1. Do dry cleanup before washing down
2. Wash without soaps and solvents
3. Keep polluted water out of storm drains
4. Dispose of wastewater correctly and legally

Source Control BMPs

The best management practices are listed by activity or area.

Exterior Fleet Washing

- Do not discharge wash water to storm drain
- Use wash pads to capture wash water
- Discharge to sanitary sewer

or

- Seal storm drain, collect, and discharge to sanitary sewer or if minimal discharge, discharge to unpaved area (with owner's permission) if it will contain all wastewater without runoff.

Semi Trailers (food service business-related interior cleaning)

- Do not discharge wash water to storm drain.
- Sweep, collect, and dispose of debris.
- Use dry cleaning methods.
- Dispose of food residue as garbage or to sanitary sewer.
- Avoid hosing down trailer.
- Send wash water to sanitary sewer.

Boat Cleaning (if paint chips are removed in preparation for painting)

- Discharge filtered wash water to sanitary sewer.
- Dispose of lead-based, copper-based, tributyltin, or PCB paint particles as hazardous waste.
- Other types of paint chips may be disposed of in a garbage can. Consult the local garbage company.

Engine and Equipment Degreasing

- Do not discharge wash water to storm drain.

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- Pretreatment is required before discharge to the sanitary sewer is allowed.
- Clean wash pads.
- Discuss with customer's facility operator first.

Acid Cleaning of Unpainted Trucks or Containers

- Do not discharge wash water to storm drain.
- Neutralize runoff to a pH between 6 and 10.
- Discharge to sanitary sewer (once runoff is neutralized).

Auto Detailing

- Small amounts of runoff may be allowed to evaporate on a paved surface.
- Plug the storm drain. Collect and discharge to sanitary sewer or if minimal discharge, discharge to unpaved area (with owner's permission) if it will contain all wastewater without runoff.
- Discharge remaining soapy wash water to sanitary sewer or distribute over a large dirt area (with owner's permission).

Rinsing of New Cars for Dust Removal (no soap)

- May discharge to storm drain or unpaved area.
- Do not allow runoff to flow through oil deposits on streets.

Treatment Control BMPs

The use of self-contained, mobile wastewater collection and treatment units may be appropriate and cost-effective for some mobile cleaning activities.

More Information

Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group, 1995. Outdoor Cleaning - Where does the Water go? Guidelines for disposal of wash water from outdoor cleaning projects: Sidewalk/plaza/parking lot cleaning, Vehicle cleaning/detailing, Building exterior cleaning, Waterproofing, Equipment cleaning/degreasing.

Fairfield-Suisun Urban Runoff Management Program, 1999. Stormwater Pollution Prevention Practices for Mobile Cleaning Activities, Guidance for Mobile Washers Who Clean Buildings Exteriors, Flat Work, Sidewalks, Drive-Throughs, Plazas, Parking Areas or Who Perform Fleet Washing, Auto Detailing, Carpet Cleaning, or Food-Related Cleaning Activities.

San Francisco Bay Area CETA (Cleaning Equipment Trade Association), 1995. Mobile Cleaner Best Management Practices for Wastewater Runoff.

References

Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group, 1995. Outdoor Cleaning - Where does the Water go? Guidelines for disposal of wash water from outdoor cleaning projects: Sidewalk/plaza/parking lot cleaning, Vehicle cleaning/detailing, Building exterior cleaning, Waterproofing, Equipment cleaning/degreasing.

City of Santa Rosa, 2001. A Clean Water Guide for the Cleaning Industry – Auto Detailer Guidelines.

Fairfield-Suisun Urban Runoff Management Program, 1999. Storm Water Pollution Prevention Practices for Mobile Cleaning Activities, Guidance for Mobile Washers Who Clean

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San Francisco Bay Area CETA (Cleaning Equipment Trade Association), 1995. Mobile Cleaner Best Management Practices for Wastewater Runoff.

Washington State Department of Ecology, 2001. Storm Water Management Manual for Western Washington, Volume IV – Source Control BMPs

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/index.html>