



# Power Washer Guidelines

Waste water from power washing, without an approved written variance, shall not be discharged to the Storm Drain system.

- Wastewater shall not be discharged into streets, storm drains or other outside drains unless a written variance is obtained and all requirements met.
- Power Washing activities shall be in compliance with the City of Sonoma's Storm Water Ordinance, Chapter 13.32. Additional enforcement, inspection, and/or incident resolution may be required by other City ordinances, codes, departments and/or other regulatory authorities such as, but not limited to, Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and California Fish and Wildlife. It is the responsibility of the property owner/operator to know and follow all local and regional codes, including obtaining proper permits, for all work to be completed.
- It is your responsibility to prevent soap, dirt, water and other materials from entering into storm drains. The purpose of storm drains are to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding. Untreated waste water and the pollutants it carries flow directly into our creeks and rivers where it can harm aquatic life and impact our recreation and drinking water.

[www.sonomacity.org/stormwater-pollution-prevention-program/](http://www.sonomacity.org/stormwater-pollution-prevention-program/)

## **Stay in Compliance, Follow these steps:**

1. For discharges directed to the sanitary sewer system, contact City of Sonoma Environmental Compliance at (707) 933-2229 to determine if the job requires a wastewater discharge permit, a fee, and/or wastewater treatment prior to any discharge to the sanitary sewer system.
2. Once you have received approval, you may discharge the wastewater to the sanitary sewer. Sanitary sewer inlets are typically indoors and include sinks, showers, bath tubs, toilets, floor drains and outside building cleanouts. You can pump to a storage tank for later disposal to the sanitary sewer. When discharging wastewater to the sanitary sewer, a mesh strainer should be used to prevent debris from clogging drains. Obtain the property owner's consent.
3. Before beginning a job, block storm drains by using waterproof sand bags to create a barrier around storm drains, plugs or rubber mats to seal storm drain openings, or use vacuum booms or temporary berms to keep wastewater away from the storm drain.
4. Avoid using any soaps or chemicals. Even biodegradable soap is harmful to fish and other aquatic life. Biodegradable soaps are designed to quickly break down in a Treatment Plant, not in a creek.
5. For all exceptions, you may be able to divert wastewater to a landscaped area or storm drain by following this process:
  - a. Sweep the entire area to collect all trash for disposal into an appropriate trash receptacle;
  - b. Use absorbents (such as rags, absorbent mats, rice hull ash, cat litter, special clay absorbent) to pick up a minimal number of greasy or oily spills (large or multiple spills will require disposal to the sanitary sewer);
  - c. Sweep or vacuum up saturated absorbents;
  - d. Never use any soaps or chemicals. Hazardous material must NOT be present.
  - e. To discharge wastewater to a landscaped, dirt or gravel area, obtain the property owner's consent. Waste water may adversely affect landscaping. Check the slope and other physical characteristics of the area to avoid runoff to the street, storm drain or other outside drains. Wastewater must be directed onto an area large enough to contain all the water. If the soil is dry, wet it down before discharging to help wastewater soak into the ground.



## **Hazardous Waste Disposal of fluids containing materials such as automotive fluids, solvents, paint, pesticides, etc.:**

1. Read cleaning product labels before disposing of wastewater. Follow use and disposal instructions carefully.
2. Check with the Sonoma County EcoDesk (707-565-DESK) for a list of approved hazardous waste recyclers and disposal sites. If you are a small business, call the EcoDesk to find out how you can dispose of hazardous waste at a local drop-off event (instead of hiring a hazardous waste hauler). Ask if you qualify for "Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator" (CESQG) programs.

# 1. Surface Cleaning

Best management practices for mobile cleaning activities

## The Goal:

Only rain in the storm drain.

## The Strategy:

Keep pollutants from contacting rain and being dumped, blown, swept, washed, or poured into storm drains.

CATEGORY ACTIVITY	WASHING/ WASHWATER DETAILS	DISPOSAL OPTIONS			BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN ORDER OF PREFERENCES
		SANITARY SEWER (SS)	LANDSCAPING DIRT AREA (LS)	STORM DRAIN (SD)	
SIDEWALKS AND PLAZAS	Using soap, no oil deposits.	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	Sweep, collect and dispose debris. Block storm drains; collect washwater; discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> or <b>soil</b> .
	No soap or oil deposits	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	(1) SS; (2) LS; (3) SD only if 1&2 not available, all conditions are met and written waiver obtained.
	No soap, light oil, frequently cleaned	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	(1) SS; (2) LS; (3) SD only if 1&2 not available, all conditions are met and written waiver obtained; use oil-absorbent boom at storm drains.
DRIVEWAYS, DRIVE THROUGH WINDOW AREAS	With or without soap, light oil, frequently cleaned	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	Sweep, collect and dispose of debris; <b>dry clean</b> all oil spots, dispose of absorbent in trash; Block storm drains; collect washwater; discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> or <b>dirt</b> .
DRIVE-THROUGHS, DRIVEWAYS, PARKING GARAGES, SERVICE STATIONS	With or without soap; excess oil deposits; not frequently cleaned	YES Pretreat	NO	NO	Block storm drains; sweep, collect and dispose of debris; <b>dry clean</b> oil spots, dispose of absorbent legally; discharge washwater to <b>sanitary sewer</b> , via oil/water separator if possible. Discuss with site operator and <b>contact</b> Water Department.
BUILDING EXTERIORS AND WALLS	Glass and steel buildings, no soap	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	(1) SS; (2) LS; (3) SD only if 1&2 not available, all conditions are met and written waiver obtained; protect drain with <b>fabric</b> filter if possible.
	Painted buildings (lead free) cleaning, no soap	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	(1) SS; (2) LS; (3) SD only if 1&2 not available, all conditions are met and written waiver obtained, use fabric <b>filter</b> to keep paint particles out of storm drain.
	Painted buildings (paint known to be lead free), cleaning for paint removal	YES	NO	NO	Block storm drains and pump wash water to a tank; water and sludge may need to be disposed of as <b>hazardous</b> waste. <b>Contact</b> Water Department. <b>Filter</b> waste water prior to <b>sanitary sewer</b> discharge.
	Painted buildings with lead-based or mercury additive paint, including cleaning for paint removal	NO	NO	NO	Block storm drains and pump wash water to a tank; water and sludge may need to be disposed of as <b>hazardous</b> waste. <b>Contact</b> Water Department, County Health and Fire Department.
GRAFFITI REMOVAL	Using wet sand blasting (with no baking soda)	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	Minimize quantity of water used. Direct washwater to <b>dirt area</b> ; <b>Filter</b> through boom to keep sand out of sanitary sewer.
	Using high pressure washing and cleaning compound	YES	MAY IMPACT LANDSCAPING	NO	Best: Block storm drains; discharge washwater to <b>sanitary sewer</b> . Discuss with site operator and <b>contact</b> Water Department. 2nd: Direct washwater to dirt area.
MASONRY EFFLORESCENCE	Using acid wash to remove mineral deposits	YES Pretreat	MAY IMPACT LANDSCAPING	NO	Block storm drains. Collect washwater, neutralize to pH 6 to 10, discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> .



## 2. Food Related

Food related and miscellaneous cleaning activities

### The Goal:

Only rain in the storm drain.

### The Strategy:

Keep pollutants from contacting rain and being dumped, blown, swept, washed, or poured into storm drains.

CATEGORY ACTIVITY	WASHING/ WASHWATER DETAILS	DISPOSAL OPTIONS			BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN ORDER OF PREFERENCES
		SANITARY SEWER (SS)	LANDSCAPING DIRT AREA (LS)	STORM DRAIN (SD)	
RESTAURANT ALLEYS, GROCERY DUMPSTER AREAS		YES	NO	NO	Best: <b>dry clean</b> only (using rags, absorbents, sweeping debris). 2nd: <b>dry clean</b> first, block storm drain, wash area, <b>filter</b> , collect and discharge washwater to <b>sanitary sewer</b> .
RESTAURANT CLEANING OF FLOOR MATS, EXHAUST FILTERS, ETC.		YES	NO	NO	Never dispose of waste grease in storm drain or sanitary sewer; contact disposal company and Environmental Compliance.
KITCHEN GREASE	Recyclable oil, grease and meat fat	NO	NO	NO	Save for recycling in sealed containers; never pour into sink, floor or storm drain; do not mix with waste grease from trap. <b>Contact</b> Environmental Compliance.
	Grease from interceptor or trap	NO	NO	NO	Best: capture washwater; Pick up litter and filter particles for discharge to sanitary sewer. (1) SS; (2) LS; (3) SD only if 1&2 not available, all conditions are met and written waiver obtained; hot water discharge to creek is prohibited.
GROCERY CARTS	Using soap	YES	NO	NO	Capture washwater; <b>filter</b> particles; discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> .
	No soap	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	Best: capture washwater; Pick up litter and filter particles for discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> . (1) SS; (2) LS; (3) SD only if 1&2 not available, all conditions are met and written waiver obtained; hot water discharge to creek is prohibited.
LUNCH WAGONS/ FOOD CARTS		YES	NO	NO	Equipment should be cleaned on wash pad at Permitted commissary equipped to discharge washwater to sanitary sewer. <b>Contact</b> County Environmental Health Department. Only melted ice may drain to storm drain.
MOBILE HOMES, DECKS, ROOFS, SHINGLES, AWNINGS, RESEIDENTIAL/ COMMERCIAL POOL DECKS (NO LEAD PAINT)	Using soap	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	Direct washwater to <b>sanitary sewer</b> or to <b>dirt area</b> .
	No soap	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	(1) SS; (2) LS; (3) SD only if 1&2 not available, all conditions are met and written waiver obtained, use <b>filter</b> barrier (boom).
CARPET CLEANING	With or without soap	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	Best: Capture washwater; <b>filter</b> particles; discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> at the work site or in a tank to dispose of at the office. 2nd: discharge to landscaped area. May impact <b>landscaping</b> .
PORTABLE TOILETS	With or without soap	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	Best: Capture washwater; discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> at the work site or in a tank to dispose of at the office. 2nd: discharge to dirt area only when the discharge can not reach a storm drain facility. Does not apply to spilled waste material.

### 3. Transportation Related

Best management practices for mobile cleaning activities

**The Goal:**  
Only rain in the storm drain.

**The Strategy:**  
Keep pollutants from contacting rain and being dumped, blown, swept, washed, or poured into storm drains.

CATEGORY ACTIVITY	DETAILS	DISPOSAL OPTIONS			BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN ORDER OF PREFERENCES
		SANITARY SEWER	LANDSCAPING DIRT AREA	STORM DRAIN	
FLEET WASHING EXTERIOR	Removing mainly dirt: with or without soap	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	Best: Use wash pads to capture washwater; discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> . 2nd: Block storm drains; collect washwater; discharge to sanitary sewer or <b>dirt</b> through <b>filter</b> .
ENGINE/ EQUIPMENT DECREASING (AIRPLANE, AUTO, TRUCK)	With or without soap; may contain petroleum products and metals	YES Pretreat	NO	NO	Use wash pads to capture washwater; drain/pump through pretreatment system before discharge to sanitary sewer; <b>Contact</b> Environmental Compliance for requirements.
ACID CLEANING OF UNPAINTED TRUCKS/METAL CONTAINERS	Typically contains acid detergents	YES Pretreat	NO	NO	Use wash pads to capture washwater; neutralize to pH between 6 and 10; discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> ; <b>contact</b> Environmental Compliance for approval.
MOBILE AUTO DETAILING	Infrequent, light cleaning; minimum water volume; removing mainly dirt with soap	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	Best: Block storm drain, collect washwater, and discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> . 2nd: direct flow onto <b>dirt</b> area.
CAR SALES LOT RINSING FOR DUST REMOVAL	Light dirt, no soap or solvents	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	(1) SS; (2) LS; (3) SD only if 1&2 not available, all conditions are met and written waiver obtained, keep runoff out of oil deposits.
CHARITY CAR WASHES	Infrequent, light cleaning; removing mainly dirt with soap	YES	CONDITIONAL	NO	Block storm drains; collect washwater; discharge to <b>sanitary sewer</b> or <b>dirt</b> .
SEMI TRAILERS AND BOATS (TRUCK TRAILER, INTERIOR CLEANING)	Food-related debris	YES	NO	NO	Sweep, collect and dispose of food residue in garbage; <b>dry clean</b> oily spots, avoid hosing down trailer; discharge any washwater to <b>sanitary sewer</b> .
	Trailer contained toxic substances	NO	NO	NO	If toxic materials spilled in trailer, <b>dry clean</b> only – do not hose down; protect/block storm drains; <b>contact</b> Fire Department for guidance.
	Boat cleaning (including removal of paint chips)	YES (NON-HAZARDOUS)	NO	NO	<b>Filter</b> washwater before discharge; dispose of paint particles properly (in garbage or as <b>hazardous</b> waste if contain lead, copper, TBT, or PCBs).



**For more information visit us online at**

**[www.sonomacity.org/stormwater-pollution-prevention-program/](http://www.sonomacity.org/stormwater-pollution-prevention-program/) or call (707) 933-2229.**

**Immediately report any hazardous material spill that reach the storm drain system by calling 911.**

**Reporting Non-Hazardous spills: (707) 933-2229**

**Hazardous waste and materials management questions:**

**[www.recology.com/recology-sonoma-marin/hazardous-electronic-waste/](http://www.recology.com/recology-sonoma-marin/hazardous-electronic-waste/)**

