

**Power washing** is any activity that uses a water pressure system, including steam cleaning, to clean vehicles, equipment, sidewalks, buildings, dumpsters, or other impervious surfaces. In addition to water, detergents, degreasers and other products may be used in commercial power washing.

## Pollution Prevention is up to you!

Did you know that storm drains are NOT connected to sanitary sewer systems or treatment plants? In Pinellas County, storm drains flow directly into our creeks, lakes, Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico without treatment.

The primary purpose of storm drains are to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding. Wash water from power washing activities may contain significant quantities of oil, grease, chemicals, dirt, and detergents that could end up in our creeks, rivers, lakes, and the ocean. Discharging wash water from power washing activities into storm drains causes serious ecological problems– and is PROHIBITED BY LAW.



## Only Rain Down the Storm Drain!

This brochure is one of a series of pamphlets describing storm water protection measures. To request additional pamphlets please contact:

Pinellas County Department of  
Environmental Management  
Watershed Management Division  
(727) 464-4425

Other pamphlets in this series include:

- Concrete and Mortar
- Pool Construction and Maintenance
- Landscaping

## Preventing Urban Runoff Pollution



## Best Management Practices For Power Washing Companies



## Pinellas County Stormwater Regulations

Pinellas County's Stormwater Ordinance, Chapter 58, Article VI, is intended to protect the water quality and natural habitats of creeks, lakes, and marine waters that receive discharge from our drainage system. The ordinance states that any discharge to the drainage system or to a waterway that is not composed entirely of stormwater is prohibited. This means that no pollutants of any kind, **including wash water from power washing activities may be discharged to the street, gutter or storm drain.**

Violations of the Stormwater Ordinance may be fined up to \$10,000 per day and payment for cleanup costs maybe required.

### Best Management Practices

The following Best Management Practices, or BMPs, are procedures that should be used to prevent pollutants, such as wash water from power washing, from entering our storm drains and polluting our waterways.

#### *Use Dry Clean-up Methods*

- Instead of pressure washing, determine what alternative dry methods are available.
- Use mops, brooms, rags or wire brushes to clean pavement, buildings, and equipment as much as possible.
- Use vacuums or other machines to remove and collect loose debris before applying water.

#### *Location, Location, Location!*

- Prior to a washing, block all stormdrains with an impervious barrier such as gravel bags or berms, or seal private stormdrains with plugs or rubber mats. Make sure this practice does not flood the area or adversely affect vehicle or pedestrian traffic.
- Never dispose of wash water into the street, storm drains, landscape drains, drainage ditches, or streams.
- Wash vehicles and equipment on grassy or gravel areas so that the wash water can seep into the ground.
- Create a containment area with berms and tarps or take advantage of low ground to keep wash water contained. Check that the wash water is not leaking through and add more berms or barriers to contain the wash water.

#### *Just Enough for the Job!*

- Minimize water use by using high pressure, low volume nozzles.
- Use the minimal amount and least toxic detergents and degreasers you will need to complete the job. Try phosphate free detergents.

#### **A Word About "Biodegradable" Soaps**

"Biodegradable" is a popular marketing term that can be misleading. Because a product is labeled as biodegradable doesn't mean that it is non-toxic. Some products are more toxic than others, but none are harmless to aquatic life. Soapy water entering the storm drain system can impact fish and other wildlife within hours.

- Use a mop or rags to clean heavily soiled areas before power washing.
- Do not wash equipment or vehicles outdoors on saturated ground or on days when rain is probable.
- Pump or vacuum up all wash water in the contained area.
- With property owners permission, pump or pour the wash water to landscaped areas that will not run off to a storm drain; or drain it to the sanitary sewer through an interior building drain, sink, or private sewer clean-out. Discharges to the sewer should not contain hazardous materials, grease, grit, or any material that could clog piping.
- Sediments and other solids remaining on the ground should be swept or vacuumed up immediately so they don't wash into the storm drain system.



### Who Can You Contact?

For any questions on disposal of waste contact the Pinellas County Department of Solid Waste Operations at (727) 464-7500

For more information, or to report illegal dumping, please call (727) 464-4425 (during business hours)

24 hour voice-mail: (727) 464-5060  
(non-emergency spills only)

For Emergencies: Please contact your local fire department