

Pressure Washing



High pressure washing, power washing or hosing down outdoor surfaces – such as buildings, windows, sidewalks, patios, fences or equipment – contributes to ocean pollution when wash water picks up pollutants and carries them to our local waterways via the storm drain system. Many of these pollutants are hazardous to San Diego residents and toxic to our environment.

Control, Contain, Capture

When using water to clean, you **MUST** have a plan to control, contain, capture and dispose of the water you use to prevent it from entering the storm drain system, which includes curb gutters, streets, alleys, ditches and storm drains.

CONTROL - Before starting the job, determine where wash water will drain and how you will block, direct and collect it. Protect storm drains with covers or sandbags. Use dry clean-up methods first, such as sweeping, vacuuming, or using an absorbent material or scraper. Obtain all permits and authorizations for wastewater disposal.

CONTAIN - Never let polluted wash water or debris leave your work area. Isolate the flow using containment pools, berms or booms to contain the water or direct it to a landscaped area. Collect wash water in a permanent or temporary capture facility. Minimize the amount of water used to clean and avoid using products that contain hazardous substances.

CAPTURE - Do not leave areas of wash water on paved surfaces for evaporation. Collect the wash water and properly dispose of it. Use a wet vacuum, vacuum boom or vacuum pump to collect contaminated runoff. Sweep up any visible solids and sediments remaining after all the wash water has been collected. Properly dispose of polluted water and debris.



STORMWATER REGULATIONS

It is illegal to discharge polluted wash water from pressure washing, power washing or hosing down outdoor surfaces into the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) (San Diego Municipal Code §43.0304). Penalties associated with these violations can be up to \$10,000 per day per incident.

Other Considerations

Contaminated urban runoff can be eliminated when proper methods are used to clean outdoor surfaces.

- ◆ Do not let polluted wash water leave your property.
- ◆ Try to minimize the amount of water used to clean by using dry cleanup methods first.
- ◆ Sweep up all sediment and debris in the area prior to washing.
- ◆ Use biodegradable, phosphate-free detergents for cleaning.
- ◆ Direct wash water to a landscaped area provided that the wash water can be absorbed by the soil without runoff or soil contamination by pushing it with a broom or by using a temporary berm, such as a containment boom, spill berm, sandbags or other blocking device.
- ◆ If you cannot direct wash water to a landscaped area you must contain, capture and dispose of the wash water to prevent runoff.
- ◆ Do not leave standing water on paved surfaces for evaporation.
- ◆ All remaining wash water must be captured using a mop, vacuum boom or wet vacuum and disposed of into the sanitary sewer system (onsite sink, toilet or lateral cleanout).
- ◆ Contact the Industrial Wastewater Control Program at (858) 654-4100 for information concerning sanitary sewer system disposal. Contact the Household Hazardous Materials Program at (858) 694-7000 for information regarding the proper disposal of hazardous waste.
- ◆ Sweep up any visible solids and sediments remaining after all the wash water has been collected.
- ◆ These regulations apply, regardless of whether the activity is conducted by the property owner, lessee, contractor or other persons.



Keep Pollutants Out of Storm Drains

Many people think that when water flows into a storm drain it is treated, but the storm drain system and the sanitary sewer system are not connected. Everything that enters storm drains flows untreated directly into our creeks, rivers, bays, beaches and, ultimately, the ocean. Stormwater often contains pollutants – including chemicals, trash and vehicle fluids – all of which contaminate our beaches and harm fish and wildlife.

Whether at home or work, you can help reduce pollution and improve water quality by using the above Best Management Practices as part of your daily cleaning and maintenance routine.

