

SOP 14: MUNICIPAL VEHICLE WASHING PROCEDURES

Introduction

Vehicle washing activities can result in the discharge of nutrients, sediment, petroleum products, and other contaminants to a surface water body or to an engineered drainage system.

Consistent with the 2003 USEPA NPDES Phase II Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit, municipal vehicle washing activities should not discharge pollutants to the MS4 system.

Outdoor Vehicle Washing Procedures

Outdoor washing of municipal vehicles should be avoided unless wash water is contained in a tight tank or similar structure. Where no alternate wash system is available, and full containment of wash water cannot be achieved, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. Avoid discharge of any wash water directly to a surface water (e.g., stream, pond, drainage swale, etc.)
2. Minimize use of water to the extent practical.
3. Where use of detergent cannot be avoided, use products that do not contain regulated contaminants. Use of a biodegradable, phosphate-free detergent is preferred.
4. Do not use solvents except in dedicated solvent parts washer systems or in areas not connected to a sanitary sewer.
5. Do not power wash, steam clean or perform engine cleaning or undercarriage cleaning.
6. Grassy and pervious (porous) surfaces may be used to promote direct infiltration of wash water, providing treatment before recharging groundwater and minimizing runoff to an adjacent stormwater system. Pervious surfaces or other infiltration-based systems shall not be used within wellhead protection areas or within other protected resources.
7. Impervious surfaces discharging to engineered storm drain systems shall not discharge directly to a surface water unless treatment is provided. Treatment can include a compost-filled sock designed specifically for removal of petroleum and nutrients, such as the Filtrexx™ FilterSoxx product, or equal. The treatment device shall be positioned such that all drainage must flow through the device, preventing bypassing or short-circuiting.
8. All adjacent engineered storm drain system catch basins shall have a sump. These structures shall be cleaned periodically (refer to SOP 3, “Catch Basin Inspection and Cleaning”).
9. Solids and particulate accumulation from the washing area shall be removed through periodic sweeping and/or cleaning.
10. Maintain absorbent pads and drip pans to capture and collect spills or noticeable leaks observed during washing activities. Clean up any spills using the procedures described in SOP 4, “Spill Response and Cleanup Procedures”.

Heavily soiled vehicles or vehicles dirtied from salting or snow removal efforts shall not be washed outside, without exception.

Indoor Vehicle Washing Procedures

Indoor vehicle washing procedures shall include the following:

1. Where use of detergent cannot be avoided, use products that do not contain regulated contaminants. Use of a biodegradable, phosphate-free detergent is preferred.
2. Detergents shall not be used in areas where oil/water separators provide pre-treatment of drainage (refer to SOP 11, “Oil/Water Separator Maintenance”, for more information).
3. Floor drains shall be connected to a sanitary sewer or tight tank. Floor drains discharging to adjacent surface water bodies or engineered storm drain systems shall be permanently plugged or otherwise abandoned before any vehicle wash activities are completed.
4. Designate separate areas for routine maintenance and vehicle cleaning. This helps prevent contamination of wash water by motor oils, hydraulic lubricants, greases, etc.
5. Dry clean-up methods, such as sweeping and vacuuming, are recommended within garage facilities. Do not wash down floors and work areas with water.
6. Bring smaller vehicles to commercial washing stations.
7. Maintain absorbent pads and drip pans to capture and collect spills or noticeable leaks observed during washing activities. Clean up any spills using the procedures described in SOP 4, “Spill Response and Cleanup Procedures”.

Heavy Equipment Washing Procedures

Heavy equipment washing procedures shall include the following:

1. Mud and heavy debris removal shall occur on impervious pavement or within a retention area.
2. Maintain these areas with frequent mechanical removal and proper disposal of spoils.
3. All adjacent engineered storm drain system components shall have a sump. These structures shall be cleaned periodically (refer to SOP 3, “Catch Basin Inspection and Cleaning”).
4. Impervious surfaces with engineered storm drain systems shall not discharge directly to a surface water.
5. Floor drains shall be connected to a sanitary sewer or tight tank. Floor drains discharging to adjacent surface water bodies or engineered storm drain systems shall be permanently plugged or otherwise abandoned before any vehicle wash activities are completed.
6. Where use of detergent cannot be avoided, use products that do not contain regulated contaminants. Use of a biodegradable, phosphate-free detergent is preferred.
7. Detergents shall not be used in areas where oil/water separators provide pre-treatment of drainage (refer to SOP 11, “Oil/Water Separator Maintenance”, for more information).
8. Maintain absorbent pads and drip pans to capture and collect spills or noticeable leaks observed during washing activities. Clean up any spills using the procedures described in SOP 4, “Spill Response and Cleanup Procedures”.

Engine Washing and Steam Washing Procedures

Engine and steam washing procedures shall include the following:

1. Do not wash parts outdoors.
2. Maintain drip pans and smaller containers to contain motor oils, hydraulic lubricants, greases, etc. and to capture and collect spills or noticeable leaks observed during washing activities, to the extent practicable. Clean up any spills using the procedures described in SOP 4, “Spill Response and Cleanup Procedures”.
3. Where use of detergent cannot be avoided, use products that do not contain regulated contaminants. Use of a biodegradable, phosphate-free detergent is preferred.
4. Avoid cleaning with solvents except in dedicated solvent parts washer systems. Make use of pressure washing and steam cleaning.
5. Recycle clean solutions and rinse water to the extent practicable.
6. Wash water shall discharge to a tight tank or a sanitary sewer via an oil/water separator. Detergents shall not be used in areas where oil/water separators provide pre-treatment of drainage (refer to SOP 11, “Oil/Water Separator Maintenance”, for more information).

Related Standard Operating Procedures

1. SOP 3: Catch Basin Inspection and Cleaning
2. SOP 8: Spill Response and Cleanup Procedures
3. SOP 11: Oil/Water Separator Maintenance