

Pressure Washing of Buildings, Rooftops, and Other Large Objects

This activity applies to you if you are engaged in pressure washing large, immobile objects such as building facades, rooftops, and awnings on a site-to-site basis. Pressure washing can readily degrade water quality as the runoff and loosened solids typically travel directly into the storm drainage system. Wash water from pressure washing operations can be contaminated with suspended solids, metals, and possibly other pollutants present on the objects being washed. Pressure washing of boats in boat yards, marinas, and dry dock areas is covered by a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, administered by the Washington State Department of Ecology, so the BMPs listed below may not apply to pressure washing in these locations.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The following BMPs, or equivalent measures, methods, or practices are required if you are engaged in pressure washing of large objects:

1

In situations where soaps or detergents are used and the surrounding area is paved, pressure washers must use a water collection device that enables collection of wash water and associated solids. A sump pump, wet vacuum or similarly effective device must be used to collect the runoff and loose materials. The collected runoff and solids must be disposed of properly.



See BMP Info Sheet 2 in Chapter 5 for information on disposal options.

2

If soaps or detergents are NOT used, and the surrounding area is paved, wash water runoff does not have to be collected but must be screened. Pressure washers must use filter fabric catch basin inserts or some other type of screening device on the ground and/or in the catch basin to trap the particles in wash water runoff.



If you are pressure washing on a grassed area (with or without soap), runoff must be dispersed as sheet flow as much as possible, rather than as a concentrated stream. The wash water runoff must infiltrate into the grass and not drain to the pavement or storm drainage system.



Another option is to hire a mobile washer who collects and recycles water or complies with the above.

If the painted surface being pressure washed is painted with lead or other heavy metal-bearing paint (such as chromium or cadmium), consider using a commercial pressure washing service that can collect, test, and properly dispose of the wastewater.

Additional BMPs

The following BMPs are optional, unless the above minimum required BMPs do not provide adequate source control:

A catch basin insert, configured for debris removal, may remove some of the pollutants in runoff from this activity. Catch basin inserts require frequent maintenance to be effective. Carefully consider this when evaluating your options.



See BMP Info Sheet 10 in Chapter 5 for more information.

For more information or assistance in implementing these best management practices, contact the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks Water and Land Resources Division at 206-296-1900.

Reader Note: The above requirements are the minimum required BMPs. If these BMPs fail to prevent discharges to the storm drainage system, you will be asked to take additional measures to correct the continued pollution discharges.