



# Stormwater Management

## Fact Sheet

### Pressure Washing

As the owner/operator of a pressure washing business you play a vital role in protecting public health and the environment. Wash water from outside power washing activities can dislodge pollutants like paint chips or oily sediments and wastewater may contain chemical cleaning residues and soaps that can flow into storm drains and end up untreated in local lakes, rivers, and streams. Roof cleaning can release fine aggregate or even toxic materials that may end up in our environment. Many of these contaminants or pollutants have the potential to destroy sensitive ecosystems, harm aquatic life and habitats, and pollute recreational sites and our water supplies. State and local regulations prohibit the discharge of contaminated or polluted water to the storm drainage system. If found to be in violation of these regulations, pressure washers can be heavily penalized with fines and prohibited from doing business in Cobb County.

#### WHAT ARE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs)?

Best management practices are proactive techniques that reduce pollution at the source before they end up in our environment. BMPs are practical and can be easily implemented.

By implementing BMPs, you will:

- protect and improve water quality
- save money on disposal costs
- be better able to comply with existing regulations
- reduce potential liabilities and avoid penalties
- offer environmentally friendly service to your customers

#### MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

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

*Soaps or detergents are not used and surrounding area is paved:*

If the surface to be cleaned contains no visible contaminants or detectable pollutants such as petroleum products, chemicals, or sewage, then wash water runoff does not have to be collected but must be screened. Pressure washers must use filter fabric catch basin inserts, oil absorbant socks, or other types of screening devices on the ground and/or in the storm drain to trap the particles in the wash water runoff to prevent pollutants from entering our lakes, rivers, and streams. If the pressure washing area makes collection impossible, direct the wash water to landscaped areas with vegetative cover.

*Soaps or detergents are used and the surrounding area is paved:*

Whether using soaps/detergents or just plain water, if the surface to be cleaned is contaminated with any detectable pollutants such as petroleum products, sewage, hazardous substances, or chemicals, then pressure washers must use a water collection device that enables the collection of wash water and associated solids. A sump pump, wet vacuum, or similarly effective device must be used to collect the wash water runoff and loose materials. The collected runoff and solids must be disposed of properly. Proper disposal of wash water containing contaminants involves directing the wash water to the sanitary sewer system or disposing of the wash water at the appropriate disposal facility. The discharge of contaminated wash water to the storm drainage system is strictly prohibited and a violation of state and local regulations.



If you have any questions about the requirements for pressure washing please feel free to contact the Water Quality Section of the Cobb County Stormwater Management Division: (770) 419-6435.