

## Vehicle Washing Rules

Reference: Clean Water Act  
Endangered Species Act  
DEQ Permit 1700A-Waster Water Discharge

The above regulations require all agencies (including Fire Departments) involved with vehicle washing or steam cleaning to follow Best Management Practices (BMP's) in order to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practical to the storm water system. Wash water from cleaning activities can contribute toxic hydrocarbons and other organic compounds, oils and greases, nutrients, heavy metals and suspended solids to storm water runoff. The soaps used for washing can also be a pollutant.

The following BMP's, or equivalent measures, methods or practices are required if you are engaged in vehicle washing and/or steam cleaning:

1. **It is allowable to rinse down the body or a vehicle, including the bed of a truck, with just water without doing any wash water control BMP's.**

If you wash (with mild detergents) on an area that infiltrates water, such as gravel, grass, or loose soil, it is acceptable to let the wash water infiltrate as long as you only wash the body of vehicles.

However, if you wash on a paved area and use detergents or other cleansers, or if you wash/rinse the engine compartment or the underside of vehicles, you must do **ONE** of the following options:

- A. Designate and pave a wash area to wash all vehicles and discharge wash water from vehicle cleaning operations to a sanitary sewer, holding tank, or process treatment system or process through an enclosed recycling system. Check with local storm water management authorities or sanitary sewer agency for wash pad design requirements.
  - B. Take the vehicles to a commercial vehicle wash or use a mobile washer, which complies with discharge rules. A pressure washer that deionizes tap water prior to use would be a mobile system that complies.
2. Designated wash areas must be well marked with signs indicating where and how washing must be done.
  3. Oil changes and other engine maintenance cannot be conducted in the designated washing area.

For additional information:

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