

Equipment and Vehicle Maintenance and Washing

It is important in any business to keep vehicles and equipment clean and maintained to ensure they function properly. Preventing oil, grease, bacteria, metals, nutrients, detergents and other chemicals from entering a storm drain during the cleaning process helps to protect the environment and the storm drainage system.

TO PREVENT WATER POLLUTION

- Do not pour or direct wash water into a storm drain, including wash water from vehicle washing.
- Dispose of wash water in a sink, sanitary sewer, or a holding tank where it can be collected and disposed of properly.
- Avoid cleaning equipment outside. If it can't be avoided, clean equipment on pervious or grassy areas that can help filter out pollutants.
- Clean small equipment or containers in mop sinks that are connected to the sanitary sewer, except if using solvents. Keep rags, mops, absorbents and other cleaning supplies readily accessible to clean up spills. Consider purchasing a spill kit.
- Use non-toxic or less hazardous cleaning products whenever possible.
- Properly store cleaning products in labeled containers.
- Keep business vehicles tuned up and check for leaks on a regular basis.

VEHICLE WASHING AT HOME

- Wash vehicles on a grassy surface so the water can infiltrate into the ground.
- Limit the amount of soap you use and use mild detergents, especially those that are phosphate-free.
- Turn off the hose while soaping up the car and rinse quickly.
- Try a waterless car washing soap, many of which are biodegradable.



DO YOU KNOW?

Dumping anything other than rain water in a storm drain is illegal.



There are a number of manufacturers that supply spill kits and drain protection products. To find these products, you can conduct an Internet search for "spill kits," "drain covers or protection products," "spill containment," or "wastewater capture."

COMMERCIAL/MOBILE VEHICLE WASHING

- Commercial car washes must comply with the county's wastewater discharge and plumbing requirements, which include preventing sand, grease or mud from entering the storm drain system and installing a county-approved water recycling system.
- Take business vehicles to car washes that recycle and treat wash water. If this is not possible, direct the dirty water into the sanitary sewer. If water cannot be directed into the sanitary sewer, collect the wash water into a portable container or wash pit and arrange for disposal at the wastewater treatment plant or an industrial disposal facility.
- Protect the storm drains by covering them with an impermeable barrier. There are a variety of covers available through commercial vendors.
- Use the minimum amount of detergents necessary and use biodegradable products that are phosphate-free and pH neutral.
- When planning a car wash fundraiser, try to partner with a commercial car washing facility or take measures to prevent dirty water from entering storm drains.
- Fairfax County's car wash fact sheet can be found at the following website:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/sites/publicworks/files/assets/documents/pdf/outdoor-vehicle-washing.pdf



Wash vehicles at a commercial facility.



A spill kit usually contains gloves, absorbent pads, booms and waste disposal bags.

