A-11: Cleaning or Washing of Tools and Equipment

Stormwater runoff (rainwater and snow melt) is the largest source of pollution to our lakes, streams and Puget Sound. King County requires businesses to implement measures to protect our shared waters. If the requirements below do not prevent pollution, additional measures are necessary.

The following best management practices (BMPs) apply to the cleaning of tools and equipment such as lawn mowers, edgers and grass trimmers, tools used at equipment repair shops, and manufacturing equipment such as saws, grinders, and screens.

For information on washing the exterior of buildings and surfaces, refer to BMP activity sheets A-15: Washing of Buildings, Rooftops, and Other Large Surfaces, and A-58: Pressure Washing, Steam Cleaning, and Similar Activities.

Required BMPs

- Discharge tool and equipment wash water to the sanitary sewer or a holding tank for offsite disposal. Approval may be needed from your sewer authority if the wash water contains pollutants such as heavy metals, toxic chemicals, oils or suspended solids. The discharge of wash water to the stormwater drain system is not allowed without treatment and an Individual Wastewater Discharge permit from the Washington State Department of Ecology.
- Rinse lawnmowers with water only on a lawn or similar area where grass clippings will not get into the stormwater drainage system or surface waters when it rains.
- Oily, soapy, or otherwise dirty water is not allowed to discharge to any stormwater drainage system or surface water.

Supplemental BMPs

- Recycle your wash water with an enclosed loop system or use self-contained parts washers. Numerous products are commercially available that recycle and contain wash water and cleaning solvents.

Additional Information

- Potential pollutants can include: hydrocarbons—such as gasoline and diesel, metals, nutrients, oil and grease, oxygen demanding substances, PCBs, pH, sediment, and other pollutants.
- *Stormwater Pollution Prevention Manual*, Chapter 3: Commercial and Multifamily BMPs
    - A-13: Vehicle Washing and Steam Cleaning
    - A-15: Washing of Buildings, Rooftops, and Other Large Surfaces
    - A-18: Vehicle and Equipment Repair and Maintenance
    - A-58: Pressure Washing, Steam Cleaning, and Similar Activities
- *Stormwater Pollution Prevention Manual*, Chapter 5: Information Sheets

  - Containment
  - Disposal
  - Oil/Water Separator
  - Water Quality Treatment BMP
- Washington State Department of Ecology's Vehicle and Equipment Washwater Discharges/Best Management Practices Manual, https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/95056.html

For more information or assistance contact the King County Stormwater Services at 206–477–4811 and visit kingcounty.gov/stormwater.