A-15: Washing of Buildings, Rooftops, and Other Large Surfaces

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 washing of objects not associated with the operation or storage of automotive equipment or machinery.

For information on the use of pressure washers, steam cleaners or similar activities, refer to BMP activity sheet A-58: Pressure Washing, Steam Cleaning, and Similar Activities.

For washing of parking lots, driveways, or other areas where automotive fluid (e.g., oil, gasoline) are present, see activity sheet A-31: Parking Lots, Driveways, and Outside Storage Areas. For washing of docks, wharves, piers, floats, and boat ramps, see activity sheet A-30: In and Over Surface Water Activities.

Required BMPs - Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB)

- Prior to washing buildings and structures, an assessment for PCB-containing building materials is required if:
    - the buildings or structures were constructed or renovated between 1950 and 1980, and;
        - the onsite stormwater drainage system discharges to a surface water—such as a lake or stream, or
        - the onsite stormwater drainage system discharges to a municipally owned stormwater drainage system.
    - Refer to the Washington State Department of Ecology's *How to Find and Address PCBs in Building Materials* for additional information.
    - Single-family homes are exempt from PCB assessment.
- The discharge of wash water to a municipal stormwater drainage system or surface water is prohibited if the building or structure is suspected or confirmed to have PCB-containing materials. The wash water must be collected and discharged to the sanitary sewer or hauled offsite for disposal at a wastewater treatment plant.
- Contact the local jurisdiction's stormwater program to inform them when PCB-containing materials are, or are likely to be, present. King County Stormwater Services can be reached at (206)477-4811.

Required BMPs

- If soaps, detergents, or any other chemicals are used, use a sump pump, wet vacuum or similar device that enables collection of wash water and associated solids so they can be disposed of properly. The wash water must not go to the stormwater

drainage system, groundwater, or surface water. This may require temporarily blocking or disconnecting downspouts from the stormwater drainage system in order to prevent illicit discharges.

- Wash water runoff does not have to be collected if:
    - PCB-containing materials are not present. An assessment is required if the building or structure was constructed or renovated between 1950 and 1980;
    - No soaps, detergents, or any other chemical (including pesticides) are used;
    - Only cold water is used. Heated water cannot be discharged to the stormwater drainage system; and
        - the wash water can be diverted to a nearby vegetated area to infiltrate into the ground; or
        - the wash water is filtered through media (e.g., filter fabric) to trap solid materials, prior to entering a stormwater drainage system. The area must be swept prior to washing, in order to remove all fines (e.g., silts and clay) that may otherwise clog or bypass the filtering process.
- Oil stains must be removed with absorbent materials prior to washing
- Wash water is not allowed to flow off-site.
- If the surface being washed has lead or other heavy metal-bearing paint or dust (such as chromium or cadmium), you must use a commercial washing service that will collect, test, and properly dispose of the wash water.
- Block or disconnect all rooftop downspouts when washing roofs. The wash water must be directed to pervious areas such as landscaping or gravel for infiltration, collected and disposed of to the sanitary sewer, or taken off-site for proper disposal.

Additional Information

- Potential pollutants can include: hydrocarbons—such as gasoline and diesel, metals, nutrients, oil and grease, oxygen demanding substances, pH, sediment, and other pollutants.
- *Stormwater Pollution Prevention Manual*, Chapter 3: Commercial and Multifamily BMPs
    - A-30: Marine Activities
    - A-31: Parking Lots, Driveways and Outside Storage Areas
    - A-58: Pressure Washing, Steam Cleaning, and Similar Activities
- *Stormwater Pollution Prevention Manual*, Chapter 5: Information Sheets
    - Catch Basin Insert
    - Containment
    - Disposal
    - Oil/Water Separator
    - Water Quality Treatment BMP

- Washington State Department of Ecology, *How to Find and Address PCBs in Building Materials*, https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2204024.pdf

Note: 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 above may not apply to washing in these locations.

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