

## Best Management Practices for Outdoor Washing

As you may or may not be aware, any water that falls on roads, parking lots, driveways, etc. is channeled to the nearest storm drain or ditch, which then carries the water to the nearest creek or stream. Several streams within Athens-Clarke County have been identified by the Environmental Protection Agency as impaired waters, meaning the water quality has been polluted and is no longer suitable for some uses. Other streams are at risk or are also of concern for water quality contaminants.

Pressure washing and mobile car washing are allowed in Athens-Clarke County, provided that proper containment measures are taken to prevent wash water from entering storm drains, ditches, streams, or rivers. There are a number of county ordinances that relate to your business, outlining specific provisions that must be followed in order to lawfully operate an outdoor washing business (see Municode References at end of document). Some examples of wash water containment include:

**Berms** serve as a protective barrier that may be used to prevent wash water from entering a storm drain; instead, the water pools around the drain prior to collection and disposal. This method may be ineffective if the drain is located at the bottom of a slope or if there is a large amount of wash water, as they do not form a water tight seal against the ground.



*Spillcontainment.com*

**Storm Drain Covers** are placed on top of a storm drain to create a quick seal and prevent wash water from entering. Wash water accumulates on top of the mat to be collected prior to disposal. These mats include magnetic vinyl mats, PVC drain covers, polyurethane mats, and more. They are frequently used in conjunction with vacuum systems.



*Water-pollutionsolutions.com*

**Latimat Wash Pad System** allows users to wash planes, trains, automobiles, trucks, trailer fleets, buildings, and machinery while containing potentially hazardous materials. During wash cycles, harmful pollutants and chemicals are removed from transport vehicles, buildings, and machinery. The Latimat® wash pad system holds these pollutants until they can be removed and purified.



*Latimat.net*

**Hydropad Portable Wash Pad** is a wash fluid containment system with an elevated, fluid-impervious surface. The surface is configured to allow fluid to flow off the surface into a collection trough. Used fluid can then be collected and recycled or disposed of.



[Hydroblaster.com](http://Hydroblaster.com)

**Vacuums/Pumps** may be used to collect wash water after pressure washing. These devices include wet/dry vacuums, sump pumps, and vacuum pumps.



[Proteam.emerson.com](http://Proteam.emerson.com) [MFSupply.com](http://MFSupply.com)

**Vacu-Boom** is a hollow, flexible tube five inches in diameter that is placed directly on a hard surface to form a downslope side dam or to completely encircle the wash or containment area.



[SMCwashers.com](http://SMCwashers.com)

**Vacuum Closed Loop Recycling Systems** are surface cleaning systems capable of removing oil, dirt, grease, rubber, and other accumulations. They utilize a “mower” attachment both pressure washes and vacuums wastewater back to a filtration system mounted on the truck.



[Forconstructionpros.com](http://Forconstructionpros.com)

## Example of Wash water Containment in Action



During a power washing project at The Standard, a wastewater containment system similar to the Vacu-Boom was used to capture all runoff effectively. The system created a seal around the work area, ensuring that no wash water entered storm drains or surrounding areas.



Using the Sirocco Vacuum system with a generator, the operator vacuums up wash water as it is generated during cleaning, preventing runoff from entering storm drains. The powerful vacuum recovers the water and debris, containing it in a secure holding tank for proper disposal. By incorporating an additional filtration system, such as the Big Blue Filter Bank, contaminants like debris and oils can be removed from the water before it is contained. This proactive approach helps avoid costly illicit discharge fines by ensuring that contaminated water is safely filtered, contained, and does not pollute local waterways.

### **Disclaimer:**

Athens-Clarke County does not and cannot endorse these products, nor have we verified any of the claims made by these companies and reproduced as examples above. Costs may also vary. It is the responsibility of an operator to research the right treatment option for the type of wash water that the operator is likely to generate.

## **Wash water Best Management Practices (BMPs)**

### **General Surface Cleaning Requirements**

(1) Reasonable efforts must be made to remove, via “dry cleaning methods,” all visible accumulations of pollutants from surfaces prior to commencement of surface cleaning.

For example:

- (a) Oil/fuel accumulations should be pre-cleaned via use of oil absorbents.
- (b) Powders, loose dirt and other similar material shall be swept or vacuumed prior to surface cleaning.
- (c) Litter, animal waste and other solid waste shall be collected prior to surface cleaning.
- (d) Liquid contaminants shall be mopped up, soaked up or otherwise collected prior to surface cleaning. All waste collected in this manner shall be disposed of appropriately.

(2) Wash water generated during surface cleaning must never be allowed to enter into a storm drain. All wash water must be properly contained and disposed of in accordance with this guideline.

(3) The individual completing the surface cleaning is responsible for the selection and appropriate use of an adequate collection, containment and disposal method that provides for the effective collection of all generated wash water and the prevention of discharge of such wash water to a storm drain. Possible containment and collection methods could include vacuum pumps, booms/berms, portable containment areas, weighted storm drain covers, holding tanks, portable sump pumps, hoses and absorbents.

(4) Leaving wash water on paved areas to dry by evaporation is not an acceptable method of disposal because residues remaining on the ground following evaporation will be washed by rainwater into storm drains during the next rain event.

### **Disposal Options**

#### **Disposal to Grassy/Vegetated Areas**

(1) Discharge to a grassy/vegetated area is permitted:

- (a) where the grassy or vegetated area is large enough to ideally provide at least 50 feet of separation between the discharge point and the nearest storm drain or waterway; and
- (b) where the grassy/vegetated area adequately allows for the absorption of the discharged wash water; and
- (c) where the discharge is distributed across the grassy/vegetated area as sheet flow and at a rate that allows for the effective infiltration of the wash water and does not allow any runoff from the grassy area; and
- (d) where any visible gross pollutants left on the grass after the discharge are collected for appropriate disposal; and
- (e) during dry weather; and
- (f) when the discharge contains only insignificant levels of pollutants that will biodegrade naturally and will not accumulate within the soil or groundwater

(2) Surface cleaning operators incur a greater level of risk when utilizing this disposal option. Operators and property owners as the generators of this waste are responsible for

knowing what pollutants may be contained within the wash water and are responsible for satisfying all applicable regulations that may govern a discharge of this waste to land.

(3) ***If you have any doubt that your generated wash water would meet all of the requirements for discharge to ground it should be collected and disposed of via one of the other more secure methods mentioned in this environmental guideline.***

#### Off-Site Disposal

- (1) All wash water generated must be collected.
- (2) Any surfaces contaminated by wash water generated during surface cleaning must be adequately rinsed with potable water (not recycled water) following completion of surface cleaning. Following rinsing, rinse water must be treated as wash water and must be collected for off-site disposal.
- (3) Off-site disposal locations must have and maintain any required permits necessary to accept and handle the collected wash water.
- (4) Wash water must be transported in a manner that ensures that no discharge occurs between the surface cleaning site and permitted off-site disposal location.

In order for you to better meet the requirements of the above ordinances and better protect our streams and rivers, Athens-Clarke County requires that all outdoor washing businesses prevent wash water from running into a stormwater drainage system, stream, or river. In order to receive approval for a business license, an outdoor washing business must:

1. Provide documentation of the wash water capture and discharge method to be employed including proof of purchase or some other evidence of capture and discharge capabilities. See attachment for examples of methods that may be used.
2. Obtain approval from the following departments by having them complete the attached form:
  - a. Transportation and Public Works (will inform applicants of necessity of preventing pollutants from entering stormwater drainage systems)
  - b. Planning (will approve home occupation permit)

We at Athens-Clarke County appreciate your cooperation as we are committed to reducing further pollution of our waterways as the first step toward cleaner water resources for the entire community.

Your signature below acknowledges receipt of a copy of this notice and an understanding of the consequences of violating Athens-Clarke County ordinances in your car and/or pressure washing or other outdoor washing business.

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Print Name and Title (Owner, Co-owner, etc.)

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Business Name

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Street Address, City, State, Zip

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Phone (Home)

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(Cell)

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Email (ex: johndoe@carwash.com)

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Signature

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Date

## **Outdoor Washing Business Approval Form**

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Applicant Name

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Date

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Business Name

1. The applicant has provided sufficient documentation to provide for the capture of **all** wastewater generated by their business' activities in accordance with the policies of the Transportation and Public Works Department's Stormwater Division.

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Signature

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Date

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Printed Name

2. The applicant has completed the appropriate forms and applications for their business in accordance with the policies of the Planning Department.

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Signature

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Date

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Printed Name

### Municode References

- No washing, greasing, or repairing vehicles in the street (**Sec. 3-3-12**)
- Potable water is not allowed to flow into the public rights-of-way (**Sec. 5-3-123(2)**)
- When washing impermeable surfaces such as driveways, parking lots, or sidewalks, a positive action quick release shut off valve or nozzle must be used. (**Sec. 5-3-123(4)**)
- Washing of impermeable surfaces may be done no more than twice a year, unless required for public health and safety (**Sec. 5-3-123(4)**)
- Wash water may not be discharged to the separate storm sewer system (**Sec. 5-4-22**)
- Waste liquid, including wash water from car washes, may not be drained to any part of the street without special permission from the Director of Public Works (**Sec. 7-3-3**)
- Parking lots are not to be used for car washing, as it is a use other than that which they were intended for. (**Sec. 9-30-11**)
- If car-washing activities take place within a parking lot, they are changing the use of the parking lot necessitating additional facilities including plumbing requirements that provide pre-treatment of the wastewater from the car-washing and other pressure washing activities (**Section 1003.1 of the 2006 International Plumbing Code**)
- The full code of ordinances can be found at <http://www.acgov.com/code>

**VIOLATING ANY OF THESE ORDINANCES IS AN OFFENSE PUNISHABLE BY FINES UP TO \$1000 FOR EACH VIOLATION AND/OR A JAIL TERM OF UP TO 6 MONTHS.**