



Description and Purpose

Vehicle and equipment cleaning procedures and practices eliminate or reduce the discharge of pollutants to stormwater from vehicle and equipment cleaning operations. Procedures and practices include but are not limited to: using offsite facilities; washing in designated, contained areas only; eliminating discharges to the storm drain by infiltrating the wash water; and training employees and subcontractors in proper cleaning procedures.

Suitable Applications

These procedures are suitable on all construction sites where vehicle and equipment cleaning is performed.

Limitations

Even phosphate-free, biodegradable soaps have been shown to be toxic to fish before the soap degrades. Sending vehicles/equipment offsite should be done in conjunction with TC-1, Stabilized Construction Entrance/Exit.

Implementation

Other options to washing equipment onsite include contracting with either an offsite or mobile commercial washing business. These businesses may be better equipped to handle and dispose of the wash waters properly. Performing this work offsite can also be economical by eliminating the need for a separate washing operation onsite.

Categories

EC	Erosion Control	
SE	Sediment Control	
TC	Tracking Control	
WE	Wind Erosion Control	
NS	Non-Stormwater Management Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
WM	Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control	

Legend:

- Primary Objective
- Secondary Objective

Targeted Constituents

Sediment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nutrients	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Trash	
Metals	
Bacteria	
Oil and Grease	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Organics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Potential Alternatives

None

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If washing operations are to take place onsite, then:

- Use phosphate-free, biodegradable soaps.
- Educate employees and subcontractors on pollution prevention measures.
- Do not permit steam cleaning onsite. Steam cleaning can generate significant pollutant concentrates.
- Cleaning of vehicles and equipment with soap, solvents or steam should not occur on the project site unless resulting wastes are fully contained and disposed of. Resulting wastes should not be discharged or buried and must be captured and recycled or disposed according to the requirements of WM-10, Liquid Waste Management or WM-6, Hazardous Waste Management, depending on the waste characteristics. Minimize use of solvents. Use of diesel for vehicle and equipment cleaning is prohibited.
- All vehicles and equipment that regularly enter and leave the construction site must be cleaned offsite.
- When vehicle and equipment washing and cleaning must occur onsite, and the operation cannot be located within a structure or building equipped with appropriate disposal facilities, the outside cleaning area should have the following characteristics:
 - Located away from storm drain inlets, drainage facilities, or watercourses
 - Paved with concrete or asphalt and bermed to contain wash waters and to prevent runoff
 - Configured with a sump to allow collection and disposal of wash water
 - No discharge of wash waters to storm drains or watercourses
 - Used only when necessary
- When cleaning vehicles and equipment with water:
 - Use as little water as possible. High-pressure sprayers may use less water than a hose and should be considered
 - Use positive shutoff valve to minimize water usage
 - Facility wash racks should discharge to a sanitary sewer, recycle system or other approved discharge system and must not discharge to the storm drainage system, watercourses, or to groundwater

Inspection and Maintenance

- Inspect and verify that activity-based BMPs are in place prior to the commencement of associated activities. While activities associated with the BMP are under way, inspect BMPs in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.

- Inspect BMPs subject to non-stormwater discharges daily while non-stormwater discharges occur.
- Inspection and maintenance are minimal, although some berm repair may be necessary.
- Monitor employees and subcontractors throughout the duration of the construction project to ensure appropriate practices are being implemented.
- Inspect sump regularly and remove liquids and sediment as needed.
- Prohibit employees and subcontractors from washing personal vehicles and equipment on the construction site.

References and Additional Resources

Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMPs) Manual, CTSW-RT-24-425.11.1, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), March 2024.

Swisher, R.D. Surfactant Biodegradation, Marcel Decker Corporation, 1987.