

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

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 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: Marine Activities.

Potential pollutants can include but are not limited to hydrocarbons, metals, nutrients, oil and grease, oxygen demanding substances, pH, sediment, and other pollutants.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are required by King County Water Quality Code (KCC 9.12). If the BMPs included here are not enough to prevent contamination of stormwater, you will be required to take additional measures.

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:
 - 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

- *Stormwater Pollution Prevention Manual*, Chapter 3: Commercial and Multifamily BMPs
 - [A-30: Marine Activities](#)
 - [A-31: Parking Lots, Driveways and Outside Storage Areas](#)
- *Stormwater Pollution Prevention Manual*, Chapter 5: Information Sheets
 - [Catch Basin Insert](#)
 - [Disposal](#)

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.