

BG-21 Automotive Service Facilities—Maintenance



Photo Credit: Geoff Brosseau

Description

This category includes facilities that conduct general maintenance and repair on vehicles such as:

- General repair shops
- Radiator repair shops
- Car dealerships
- Car washes
- Fleet maintenance operations

Information specific to auto dismantling, body repair, and service stations is provided in other guide sheets.

Approach

Minimize exposure of maintenance areas to rain and runoff by using cover and containment. In and around these areas, use good housekeeping measures to minimize the generation of pollutants. Make stormwater pollution prevention best management practices (BMPs) a part of standard operating procedures and the employee training program. Provide employee education materials in the first language of employees, as necessary.

Pollutant Sources

- Changing oil and other fluids
- Cleaning engines and parts
- Flushing radiators
- Washing cars and other vehicles

Relevant Pollutants

- Heavy metals (copper, lead, nickel, and zinc)
- Hydrocarbons (oil and grease, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons PAHs)
- Toxic chemicals (solvents, chlorinated compounds, glycols)
- Acids and alkalis



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Source Control BMPs

The BMPs are listed in this table by activity or area.

Changing Oil and Other Fluids	<p>Waste oil, antifreeze, and other vehicle fluids contain toxic chemicals and heavy metals from wear and tear of engine parts.</p> <p>(See fact sheet SC-22 Vehicle and Equipment Repair for related information.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Whenever possible, change vehicle fluids indoors and only on floors constructed of nonporous materials. Avoid working over asphalt and dirt floors—surfaces that absorb vehicle fluids. ❑ If vehicle fluids must be drained outdoors, always use a drip pan. Prevent spills from reaching the street or storm drain either by working over an absorbent mat and covering nearby storm drains or by working in a bermed area. If necessary, you can use absorbent socks to create a bermed area. ❑ When draining fluids into a drip pan, place a larger drip pan (e.g., 3 feet x 4 feet) under the primary pan to catch any spilled fluids. ❑ Transfer used fluids drained from vehicles to a designated waste storage area as soon as possible. Drip pans and other open containers of fluids should not be left unattended unless they are covered and within secondary containment. ❑ Store waste containers of antifreeze and oil within secondary containment. Antifreeze and waste oil should be either stored separately and recycled or disposed of as hazardous waste. ❑ Never pour vehicle fluids or other hazardous wastes into sinks, toilets, floor drains, outside storm drains, or the garbage. Keep these substances in designated storage areas until recycled or disposed of safely. ❑ Drain fluids from leaking or wrecked vehicles as soon as possible to avoid leaks and spills.
Cleaning Engines and Parts, and Flushing Radiators	<p>Solvents and other engine cleaning fluids are hazardous to employees and can cause pollution in storm sewers and nearby creeks and streams.</p> <p>(See fact sheet SC-21 Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning and fact sheet SC-22 Vehicle and Equipment Repair for related information.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Eliminate discharges from these operations to the sanitary sewer and storm drains. Use a licensed service to haul and recycle or dispose of wastes. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Designate specific areas or service bays for engine, parts, radiator cleaning. Do not wash or rinse parts outdoors. ❑ Use self-contained sinks and tanks when working with solvents. Keep sinks and tanks covered when not in use.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Inspect degreasing solvent sinks regularly for leaks, and make necessary repairs immediately. ❑ Avoid soldering over drip tanks. Sweep up drippings and recycle or dispose of as hazardous waste. ❑ Rinse and drain parts over the solvent sink or tank so that solvents will not drip or spill onto the floor. Use drip boards or pans to catch excess solutions and divert them back to a sink or tank. ❑ Allow parts to dry over the hot tank. If rinsing is required, rinse over the tank as well. ❑ Collect and reuse parts cleaning solvents and water used in flushing and testing radiators. <p>Note: When reuse is no longer possible, these solutions could be hazardous wastes and must be disposed of properly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Never discharge cleaning solutions used for engines or parts into the sewer system without adequate treatment. Most facilities have these solutions hauled off-site as hazardous waste because of the permits necessary for on-site treatment. ❑ Discharge rinse water to the sanitary sewer only after adequate treatment and approval of the local municipal wastewater utility. ❑ Never discharge wastewater from steam cleaning or engine/parts cleaning to a street, gutter, or storm drain. ❑ Sweep or use a vacuum to clean up dust and debris from scraping or bead-blasting radiators. ❑ Consider using static tanks for rinsing to reduce the volume of discharged rinse water. ❑ Consider using counter-current rinsing to reduce water usage and rinse water discharges.
Washing Cars and Other Vehicles	<p>(See fact sheet SC-21 Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning for related information.)</p> <p>Regular Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ If car washing is a central activity of your business, the preferred option is to treat and recycle the wash water. ❑ Designate a vehicle washing area and wash cars and trucks only in that area. This “wash pad” should be bermed or protected from storm drains and should drain to an oil/water separator before discharging to the sewer. ❑ Cover an outside wash pad or minimize the area of an uncovered pad to reduce the amount of rainwater reaching the sewer. Consult your local municipal wastewater utility for guidance.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Minimize the use of acid-based wheel cleaners. These products might require additional treatment beyond oil/water separation before discharge to the sewer. <p>Occasional Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Even biodegradable soap is toxic to fish and wildlife. Whenever possible, take vehicles to a commercial car wash. ❑ If soap is used in washing, the wash water must be collected and discharged, preferably with treatment, to the sanitary sewer. Do not discharge this water to a storm drain. ❑ Never rinse off spray-on acid-based wheel cleaners where rinse water may flow to a street, gutter, or storm drain. <p>Washing New Vehicles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ If cleaning the exterior of new vehicles with water only, the discharged water can go to the storm drain directly. ❑ Always protect the storm drains from solvents used to remove protective coatings from new cars. Discharges of these solvents to the sanitary sewer must receive adequate treatment and approval of the local municipal wastewater utility.
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Keeping a Clean Shop

Good housekeeping practices minimize liability, reduce costs, and make it easier to detect spills and potential problems. (See fact sheet SC-22 Vehicle and Equipment Repair for related information.)

<p>Good House-Keeping Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Use drip pans under leaking vehicles to capture fluids. ❑ Sweep or vacuum the shop floor frequently. Use mopping as an alternative to hosing down work areas. ❑ If mopping is used to clean shop floors: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Spot clean” any spilled oil or fluids using absorbents or rags. 2. Use dry cleanup methods: Sweep the floor using absorbents. 3. If mopping is still needed after steps 1 and 2, mop and discharge mop water to the sanitary sewer. ❑ Do not pour mop water into the parking lot, street, gutter, or storm drain. ❑ Remove unnecessary hoses to discourage washing down floors and outside paved areas. <p>Regularly sweep parking lots and areas around your facility instead of washing them down with water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Collect all metal filings, dust, and paint chips from grinding, shaving, and sanding and dispose of the waste properly. Never discharge these wastes to the storm drain or sanitary sewer.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Collect all dust from brake pads separately and dispose of the waste properly. Never discharge these wastes to the storm drain or sanitary sewer. ❑ Send rags to an industrial laundry. ❑ Inspect storm drain inlets and catch basins within the facility boundary and clean if necessary before the rainy season (October 1) each year. ❑ Consider using an oleophilic mop to pick up oil but not water to reduce the volume of waste liquids you collect and reduce your cost for disposal.
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Storage

Appropriate storage protects your shop from hazardous spills. Consult your local hazardous waste agency for details. (See SC-30 series fact sheets on Material and Waste Management for related information.)

Proper Material and Waste Storage Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Store hazardous materials and wastes where they are protected from rain and in a way that prevents spills from reaching the sanitary sewer or storm drain. ❑ Keep lids on waste barrels and containers, and store them indoors or under cover to reduce the potential for exposure to rain. ❑ All hazardous wastes must be labeled according to hazardous waste regulations. Consult the fire department or your local municipal waste management and recycling agency for details. ❑ Keep wastes separate to increase your waste recycling/disposal options and to reduce your costs. ❑ Never mix waste oil with fuel, antifreeze, or chlorinated solvents. Consult your hazardous waste hauler for details. ❑ Double-contain all bulk fluids to prevent accidental discharges to the sewer and storm drain. Consult the fire department or municipal waste management and recycling agency for details. ❑ Carefully transfer fluids from drip pans and other collection devices to designated waste storage areas as soon as possible. ❑ When receiving vehicles to be parted or scavenged, park them on a paved surface and properly drain and collect gasoline and other fluids immediately.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Drain all fluids from components such as engine blocks to store for reuse or recycling. Keep the components under cover and on a drip pan. ❑ Store new batteries securely to avoid breakage and acid spills during earthquakes. Shelving should be secured to the wall. ❑ Store used batteries indoors in plastic trays to contain potential leaks. Recycle old batteries.

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Spill Prevention and Control

Spills cause safety hazards for employees and can spread if not cleaned up immediately. The best spill control is prevention. (See fact sheet SC-11 Spill Prevention, Control and Cleanup for related information.)

Spill Prevention and Control Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Maintain and keep current, as required by other regulations, a spill response plan and ensure that employees are trained on the elements of the plan. ❑ Contain and cover all solid and liquid wastes—especially during transfer. ❑ Purchase and maintain the proper absorbent materials for containment and cleanup of different spills, and make sure they are easily accessible anywhere in the shop. Saturated absorbents generally must be disposed of as hazardous waste. ❑ “Spot clean” leaks and drips routinely to prevent runoff of spillage. Leaks are not cleaned up until the absorbent is picked up and disposed of properly. ❑ Seal or remove floor drains to prevent accidental discharge to the sewer system. ❑ Minimize the distance between waste collection points and storage areas.
Outdoor Waste Receptacle Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Minimize the possibility of stormwater pollution from outside waste receptacles by doing at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use only watertight waste receptacles and keep the lids closed, ✓ Grade and pave the waste receptacle area to prevent run-on of stormwater, ✓ Install a roof over the waste receptacle area, ✓ Install a low containment berm around the waste receptacle area, or ✓ Use and maintain drip pans under waste receptacles.
Air/Water Supply Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Minimize the possibility of stormwater pollution from air/water supply areas by doing at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ “Spot clean” leaks and drips routinely to prevent runoff of spillage,
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Grade and pave the air/water supply area to prevent run-on of stormwater, ✓ Install a roof over the air/water supply area, or ✓ Install a low containment berm around the air/water supply area.

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Recycling / Wastewater Treatment

Recycling and properly treating wastes protects the environment and reduces costs. (See fact sheet SC-22 Vehicle and Equipment Repair and fact sheet SC-34 Waste Handling and Disposal for related information.)

Recycling/ Wastewater Management Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide properly labeled containers, drums, or totes to recycle solvents, paints, oil filters, antifreeze, motor oil, batteries, and lubricants.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Set up a recycling system to make it easy for employees to separate wastes and to recycle.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose wastewater treatment systems that are easy to maintain and repair.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Properly maintain and service all pretreatment equipment, including sumps, separators, and grease traps, to ensure proper functioning. Follow manufacturer's maintenance instructions and consider using a licensed service to conduct maintenance on a regular basis.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently inspect equipment for malfunctioning parts, leaks, and the accumulation of pollutants such as oil and grease. Since pretreatment equipment is supposed to remove pollutants, a lack of accumulation could be a sign of a malfunction.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Retain only a licensed vendor to haul away and dispose of wastes.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider installing self-contained, zero-discharge treatment systems that recycle wastewater.

Purchasing

Purchasing decisions have a direct and long-term impact on the products used and disposed of by your shop. Make pollution prevention easier and reduce costs and liability by controlling the types and amounts of products purchased.

- Ask your supplier for information on less toxic chemical cleaners and other products. There are alternatives to chlorinated solvents, chlorofluorocarbons, and 1,1,1, trichloroethane.
- Ask your supplier for copper-free brake pads. Boxes have a 3-leaf logo and all three leaves are filled in (green or black). These will keep copper out of your shop and protect waterways and sensitive fish like salmon.
- Minimize inventory by purchasing only as much product as you need for the foreseeable future. This will reduce your storage space needs, inventory tracking costs, and liability for storing hazardous materials and waste.

Education and Training

Your success in following these guidelines depends on an effective training program.

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- Train all employees upon hiring and annually thereafter on personal safety, chemical management, and proper methods for handling and disposing of waste. Make sure that all employees understand stormwater discharge prohibitions, wastewater discharge requirements, and these BMPs. Use a training log or similar method to document training.
- Post instructional/informational signs around your shop for customers and employees. Put signs above all sinks prohibiting discharges of vehicle fluids and wastes. Put signs on faucets (hose bibs) reminding employees and customers to conserve water and not to use water to clean up spills.
- Label drains within the facility boundary by paint/stencil (or equivalent) to indicate whether they flow to an oil/water separator, directly to the sewer, or to a storm drain. Labels are not necessary for plumbing fixtures directly connected to the sanitary sewer.

Treatment Control BMPs

If treatment controls are installed at the facility, see section 4 of this Handbook for information on inspecting and maintaining the BMPs.

For information on designing treatment controls, see section 5 of the *Development Planning Handbook*.

More Information

Booklets, Checklists, Fact Sheets, and Pamphlets

Alameda County Clean Water Program. 2012. *Tips for a Cleaner Bay: How Your Vehicle Service Facility Can Prevent Stormwater Pollution*. Available online at http://www.cleanwaterprogram.org/uploads/IIDC_Vehicle_2012.pdf.

California Environmental Protection Agency Department of Toxic Substance Control. 2016. *New Regulations for Brake Pads Sold in California*. Available online at <https://dtsc.ca.gov/2016/12/30/new-regulations-for-brake-pads-sold-in-california/>.

California Environmental Protection Agency Department of Toxic Substance Control. n.d. *Limiting Copper in Brake Pads*. Available online at <https://dtsc.ca.gov/scp/limiting-copper-in-brake-pads/>.

California Department of Toxic Substances Control. 2010. *California Green Station Program, Vehicle Service and Repair (VSR)*. Webpage includes fact sheets, training modules, and other resources. Available online at <https://dtsc.ca.gov/vehicle-service-and-repair-vsr/>.

California Department of Toxic Substances Control. 2001. *Case Studies in Aqueous Parts Cleaning*. Available online at <https://dtsc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2018/01/CasestudiesAuto02.pdf>.

Sacramento Stormwater Management Program. n.d. *Best Management Practices for Industrial Storm Water Pollution Control*. Available online at <http://www.waterresources.saccounty.net/stormwater/documents/industrial-BMP-manual.pdf>.

San Bernardino County Stormwater Program. n.d. *Gas Station—Illegal Discharge*. (Pamphlet). Available online at <http://sbcountystormwater.org/PDF/SBC-Gas-Station-Handout.pdf>.

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San Bernardino County Stormwater Program. n.d. Stormwater Pollution Prevention Auto Maintenance. (Pamphlet). Available online at http://sbcounystormwater.org/PDF/fact_sheets/Fact_sheet_Auto.pdf.

State of Washington Department of Ecology. 2010. *Better Brakes Law*. Available online at <https://ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-toxic-chemicals/Better-Brakes-law>.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1999. *Best Environmental Practices for Auto Repair: Aqueous Part Cleaning*. Available online at <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-02/documents/autoclean.pdf>.

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1999. *Profit through Prevention, Best Environmental Practices for Fleet Maintenance*. Available online at <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-02/documents/profit.pdf>.

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Alameda County Clean Water Program. 2012. *Tips for a Cleaner Bay: How Your Vehicle Service Facility Can Prevent Stormwater Pollution*. Available online at http://www.cleanwaterprogram.org/uploads/IIDC_Vehicle_2012.pdf.

California Coastal Commission. 2002. *Model Urban Runoff Program Appendix 4W BMPs for Vehicle Service Facilities*. Available online at <http://www.montereysea.org/docs/program/MURP.pdf>.

City of Santa Cruz. Revised 2010. *Vehicle Service Facilities: Best Management Practices – Chapter 1 of Best Management Practices Manual for the Storm Water Program*. Available online at <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/home/showdocument?id=6038>.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2017. *Auto Repair and Fleet Maintenance Pollution Prevention*. Includes fact sheets and videos. Available online at <https://www3.epa.gov/region9/waste/p2/autofleet/index.html>.