

# BG-64 Mobile Cleaning—Vehicle and Equipment Washing



Photo Credit: Geoff Brosseau

## Description

This category includes businesses that conduct their own mobile cleaning or “power washing” activities as well as those that are hired as contractors to conduct these activities. Mobile cleaning differs from other cleaning activities in that the cleaning is not conducted in a dedicated, fixed location with a wastewater capture and treatment system connected to a sanitary sewer system. This category includes mobile cleaning or power washing of transportation-related objects or areas including the following:

- Mobile cleaning or power washing of vehicle exteriors
- Engine or equipment degreasing
- Acid cleaning of unpainted trucks or containers
- Auto detailing
- Car lot rinsing

Information specific to food service business-related cleaning, surface cleaning, or cleaning of amenities is provided in other guide sheets.

## Approach

The potential for generating stormwater pollution as part of these activities requires extra attention because by definition these activities are conducted outside with water (and sometimes with chemicals) for the purpose of removing residues, dirt, and debris. Make stormwater pollution prevention best management

### Pollutant Sources

- Using harmful cleaning chemicals, including soaps and solvents
- Removing toxic materials such as oil, antifreeze, and grease
- Generating polluted wash water from cleaning activities

### Relevant Pollutants

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



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practices (BMPs) and proper wastewater disposal a part of standard operating procedures and the employee training program. Provide employee education materials in the first language of employees, as necessary.

Use the following four-step approach:

1. Do dry cleanup before washing down.
2. Wash without soaps and solvents.
3. Keep polluted water out of storm drains.
4. Dispose of wastewater properly and legally.

## Source Control BMPs

The BMPs are listed in this table by activity or area. Discharging wastewater to a sanitary sewer must be performed in accordance with local regulations.

<b>Exterior Fleet Washing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not discharge contaminated wash water to a storm drain.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use wash pads to capture wash water.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use one of the following practices for disposal of the wash water: Either:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Discharge to a sanitary sewer.</li></ul>or<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Temporarily seal the storm drain, collect the wash water, and discharge the water to a sanitary sewer or, if there is minimal discharge, discharge it to a vegetated area (with the owner's permission) if it will contain all wastewater without runoff.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Semi-Trailers (food service business-related interior cleaning)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not discharge wash water into storm drain inlets.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sweep, collect, and dispose of debris.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use dry cleaning methods.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Dispose of food residue as garbage or to a sanitary sewer.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid hosing down a trailer.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Send wash water to a sanitary sewer.</li></ul>
<b>Boat Cleaning (if paint chips are removed in preparation for painting)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discharge filtered wash water to a sanitary sewer.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Dispose of lead-based, copper-based, tributyltin, or PCB paint particles as hazardous waste.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Other types of paint chips can be disposed of in a garbage can. Consult the local garbage company.</li></ul>
<b>Engine and Equipment Degreasing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not discharge wash water to a storm drain.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Pretreatment is required before discharge to a sanitary sewer is allowed.</li></ul>

# BG-64 Mobile Cleaning—Vehicle and Equipment Washing

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Clean wash pads.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the process with the customer's facility operator first.</li></ul>
<b>Acid Cleaning of Unpainted Trucks or Containers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not discharge wash water to a storm drain.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Neutralize runoff to a pH between 6 and 10.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discharge to a sanitary sewer (once runoff is neutralized).</li></ul>
<b>Auto Detailing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Small amounts of runoff can be allowed to evaporate on a paved surface.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Plug the storm drain. Collect and discharge the runoff to a sanitary sewer or, if there is minimal discharge, discharge it to an unpaved area (with the owner's permission) if it will contain all the wastewater without runoff.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discharge the remaining soapy wash water to a sanitary sewer or distribute it over a large dirt area (with the owner's permission).</li></ul>
<b>Rinsing of New Cars for Dust Removal (no soap used)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discharge the rinse water to a storm drain or unpaved area.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not allow runoff to flow through oil deposits on a street.</li></ul>

## Treatment Control BMPs

The use of self-contained, mobile wastewater collection and treatment units might be appropriate and cost-effective for some mobile cleaning activities.

# BG-64 Mobile Cleaning—Vehicle and Equipment Washing

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## References

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