

# BG-65 Mobile Cleaning—Water Softeners



Photo Credit: Geoff Brosseau

## Description

This category includes businesses that conduct their own mobile cleaning 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 servicing water softeners in residential and/or commercial locations.

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

## Pollutant Sources

For this category of businesses, regeneration is the main source of pollutants. The pollutants can include brine containing chlorides, calcium, and magnesium.

## Approach

Never discharge wash water or wastewater from these activities to a street or gutter, or near a storm drain. Make stormwater pollution prevention best management 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.

## Source Control BMPs

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



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<b>Brine Disposal</b>	<p>Brine from regeneration must be discharged to a sink or toilet, or other drain connected to a sanitary sewer system—never to a street, gutter, parking lot, or storm drain. Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Empty the brine into a utility sink or other indoor sewer connection at the service provider’s home base.</li><li>or</li><li>✓ Arrange with the customer to discharge the brine into a toilet or utility sink on their premises.</li></ul> <p>□ Check the local wastewater authority’s requirements for discharge. Some wastewater authorities might prohibit discharge of brine to a sewer system, particularly where discharge salinity is regulated. In those areas, on-site regeneration is not allowed.</p>
<b>Wastewater Salinity Reduction</b>	<p>Reducing the salinity content of your wastewater can reduce the impacts of salinity on the sanitary sewer system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Put kitchen food waste in the trash instead of the in-sink garbage disposal. Food waste is high in salt.</li><li>□ If you use powdered soap in your dishwashers or washing machine, replace it with liquid soap. Powdered soaps have a higher salt content.</li><li>□ Use dryer sheets instead of liquid laundry softeners. Liquid softeners have a high salt content.</li><li>□ When cleaning floors, use mopping pads instead of a traditional mop and bucket of water.</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.

## References

Orange County Stormwater Program. n.d. Industrial/Commercial Business Activities Best Management Practices. Fact Sheet IC24 Disposal of Wastewater Generated by Mobile Businesses & Outdoor Activities. Available online at <http://ocwatersheds.com/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=10201>.

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Office of Water Resources. 2012. *Best Management Practices for the Discharge of Residential Water Softener Backwash Brine in Unsewered Areas*. Available online at <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/permits/privwell/pdfs/backwash.pdf>.