

Stormwater Best Management Practices



Pressure Washing

Help protect our valley's water supply

A Best Management Practice (BMPs) is defined as any program, process, location criteria, operating method, measure or device which controls, prevents, removes or reduces pollution.



Pressure washing is a widely used cleaning method that helps keep a commercial property well maintained. But it's important to know that waste water from pressure washing can harm the environment when done improperly. Waste water that enters a storm drain flows directly into Lake Mead without being treated or cleaned to remove pollutants. Pollutants discharged to the storm drain harm fish and wildlife and contaminate recreational sites and drinking water supplies.

A 2005 report by the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation found that 78 percent of the American public does not understand that runoff from cities, agricultural land, roads and lawns is now the most common source of water pollution, and 47 percent of Americans still believe industry still accounts for most water pollution.

Las Vegas has a population of about 2,250,000 and is growing at a rate of around 10,000 people per year. As more homes and businesses are built, there are more impervious surfaces for water and runoff, as well as more people to potentially pollute our water. For this reason, water quality awareness is crucial.

When Is It Acceptable To Discharge Water?

Water from pressure washing can be an allowable discharge to the storm drain if the following criteria are met:

- ✓ Pressure washing is done without any soaps or solvents.
- ✓ It is light washing and no contaminants, trash or sediment are being picked up.
- ✓ There is no oil in the water (no oil sheen is visible), and
- ✓ There are no hazardous wastes such as paint, chemicals, vehicle fluids, acids, or other contaminants being washed away with the water.



When these requirements are met, water from pressure washing can be safely allowed to enter the storm drain. Otherwise, other measures can be taken to prevent waste water from entering Lake Mead. See the flip side to learn about the best practices for pressure washing.

Pressure Washing: Best Management Practices

When pressure washing is not light washing, water should not be allowed to enter the storm drain. As previously stated, water that enters the storm drain isn't treated and will go directly into Lake Mead. Instead, the following measures can be taken to reduce pollutants from entering the storm drain system:

- ✓ Prior to pressure washing, sweep the area to remove debris and loose trash.
- ✓ Dry clean oil spots with absorbent and appropriately dispose of absorbent.
- ✓ Provide adequate controls to contain and collect all wash water used. No wash water should leave the site.
- ✓ Collect the wash water and dispose of it in an approved off-site location.
- ✓ Or direct the wash water onto onsite landscape areas where it can infiltrate into the ground.
- ✓ Prevent reoccurring spills and stains by implementing control measures that help mitigate or eliminate spills.
- ✓ Regularly inspect and maintain outside areas to prevent pollutants from entering the storm drain system.



Vacuuming water from pressure washing activities is an effective way to keep waste water from entering the storm drain system.



Place absorbent over oil spills and dispose of the absorbent. Oil spills should never be washed into the storm drain or sanitary sewer.

Special care should be taken when pressure washing around hazardous materials. Hazardous materials include any auto fluids, paints or chemicals. These items should be collected separately and disposed at a liquid waste disposal company.

Hazardous waste should never be discharged into a storm drain or the sanitary sewer. Although water entering the sanitary sewer is treated and cleaned, hazardous waste can negatively impact sewer lines and water treatment facilities, leading to expensive repairs.

When hazardous materials are not present in the wash water, the water can be safely directed to onsite landscape areas. By following these guidelines, pressure washing can help the quality of our water by removing pollutants that might otherwise enter Lake Mead.

Thank you for **improving the quality** of our water

If you would like more information on water quality pollution prevention, contact the **Water Quality Team**:

Phone: 702-668-8674

Email: waterquality@cleanwaterteam.com

Visit our website: ClarkCountyNV.gov/water-quality

