



***Pollution Solutions For:
Pressure Washing Businesses
– Don't "Feed" The Fishes!***



Most pressure washing is conducted outside. This can result in the discharge of wastewater into ditches or a storm drainage system. Discharge of pressure washing wastewater to surface water bodies (ditches, streams, lakes, marine waters) or to stormwater collection systems is prohibited under state law because the wash water can contain pollutants from the cleaning compounds used (even soap is toxic) and/or from the objects or surfaces being cleaned.

Anything that is washed into storm drains is not treated and ultimately ends up in the nearest bay. Even cleaners labeled "biodegradable" and "non-toxic" can be harmful to aquatic life.

Storm drains (nearly all outside drains): These are intended to collect and transport clean rainfall to the bay. There is no treatment and no contaminants are removed. Only clean rainwater should go into storm drains.

Sanitary sewers (sinks, toilets, floor sinks, and (most) floor drains): These transport waste to a wastewater treatment plant where *some* pollutants are removed prior to discharge to the bay.

What is the goal?

1. Keep pollutants out of surface water and stormwater.
2. Keep pollutants out of the environment to the maximum degree possible.

How can we achieve these goals and still do our jobs?

1. When possible, the preferred method of disposal for the wash water is to collect it and send it to the sanitary sewer for treatment. Important caveat: Always make sure you ask for permission from the sewer authority prior to discharge. Contact info:
 - o Friday Harbor Sewer Dept. Supervisor: Don Reitan, 378-5400
 - o Fisherman Bay Sewer District Supervisor: Geoffrey Holmes, 468-2724/2131
 - o Eastsound Sewer & Water District Superintendent: Roy Light, 376-2720
2. If you cannot use option number 1, try and divert wash water to a flat, well-vegetated area located away from storm drains and surface water. The idea is to detain the wash water allowing naturally occurring microbes to break down pollutants while the wash water slowly infiltrates into the ground. Avoid wash water run-off! This option *may not be appropriate* for wash water that contains solvents, acids, or other hazardous waste.
3. Always collect any solid materials (like paint chips) and dispose of these properly (some may be considered "hazardous waste" due to the presence of lead or other pollutants).
 - o Place tarps on the ground to collect paint chips while pressure washing a building.
 - o Construct diversion dams to slow water down so that solids are allowed to settle and can be collected for disposal.
4. San Juan County does have several "sump & pump" kits which collect soapy water from a catch basin inlet and will pump to a sanitary sewer or vegetated area for infiltration. You can borrow the kit for free. These kits will not work at every site. Call the numbers below for more information.

Special note for pressure washers & window washers that use soaps and detergents: Soaps are pollutants, too! Recent problems at the fish aquarium at the end of Spring Street dock in Friday Harbor have demonstrated that soaps are directly toxic to fish and other marine animals. Do not allow soap to discharge to any ditch, surface water, or storm drain!

Questions?

Contact Brian Rader, San Juan County Pollution Prevention Specialist, 370-7581, or Helen Venada, San Juan County Waste Reduction and Hazardous Waste Coordinator, 370-0503.