



## Pollution Prevention Is Up To You!

Did you know that stormdrains are NOT connected to sanitary sewer systems or treatment plants? In Pinellas County, stormdrains flow directly into our creeks, lakes, Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico without treatment.

The primary purpose of stormdrains is to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding. Contaminated wash water and construction materials washed into stormdrains carry chemicals and harmful pollutants which can cause fish kills. Disposing of yard waste into stormdrains causes serious ecological problems – and is PROHIBITED BY LAW.

## Only Rain Down the Stormdrain!

This brochure is one of a series describing storm water protection measures. To request additional brochures please contact:

Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management  
Watershed Management Division  
(727) 464-4425

Other brochures in this series include:

- ✓ Concrete and Mortar Projects
- ✓ Fertilizer Ordinance
- ✓ A Guide For Homeowners
- ✓ Landscaping Companies
- ✓ Pool Construction and Maintenance



[www.pinellascounty.org/environment](http://www.pinellascounty.org/environment)

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## Preventing Urban Runoff Pollution

Best Management Practices For

## Power Washing



**Power washing** is any activity that uses a water pressure system, including steam cleaning, to clean vehicles, equipment, sidewalks, buildings, dumpsters or other impervious surfaces. In addition to water, detergents, degreasers and other products may be used in commercial power washing.

## Pinellas County Stormwater Regulations

Pinellas County's Stormwater Ordinance, Article VI, Chapter 58, is intended to protect the water quality and natural habitats of creeks, lakes and marine waters that receive discharge from our drainage system. The ordinance states that any discharge to the drainage system or to a waterway, that is not composed entirely of stormwater, is prohibited. This means that **pollutants of any kind, including contaminated wash water and construction materials, may NOT enter the street, gutter or stormdrain.**

Violators of the Stormwater Ordinance may be fined up to \$10,000 per day, and payment for cleanup costs may be required.

### A Word About "Biodegradable" Soaps

"Biodegradable" is a popular marketing term that can be misleading. Because a product is labeled as biodegradable doesn't mean that it is non-toxic. Some products are more toxic than others, but none are harmless to aquatic life. Soapy water entering the stormdrain system can impact fish and other wildlife within hours.

## Best Management Practices

The following Best Management Practices, or BMPs, are procedures that should be used to prevent pollutants, such as contaminated wash water and construction materials, from entering our stormdrains and polluting our waterways.

### Use Dry Cleanup Methods

- Instead of pressure washing, determine what alternative dry methods are available.
- Use mops, brooms, rags or wire brushes to clean pavement, buildings and equipment as much as possible.
- Use vacuums or other machines to remove and collect loose debris before applying water.

### Location, Location, Location!

- Prior to washing, block all stormdrains with an impervious barrier such as gravel bags or berms, or seal private stormdrains with plugs or rubber mats. Make sure this practice does not flood the area or adversely affect vehicle or pedestrian traffic.
- Never dispose of wash water into the street, stormdrains, landscape drains, drainage ditches or streams.
- Wash vehicles and equipment on grassy or gravel areas so that the wash water can seep into the ground.
- Create a containment area with berms and tarps or take advantage of low ground to keep wash water contained. Check that the wash water is not leaking through. If it is, add more berms or barriers to contain the wash water.

### Just Enough for the Job!

- Minimize water use by using high-pressure, low-volume nozzles.
- Use the minimal amount and least toxic detergents and degreasers you will need to complete the job. Use phosphate-free detergents.
- Use a mop or rags to clean heavily soiled areas before power washing.
- Do not wash equipment or vehicles outdoors on saturated ground or on days when rain is probable.
- Pump or vacuum up all wash water in the contained area.
- With property owners permission, pump or pour the wash water to landscaped areas that will not run off to a stormdrain, or drain it to the sanitary sewer through an interior building drain, sink or private sewer clean-out. Discharges to the sewer should not contain hazardous materials, grease, grit or any material that could clog piping.
- Sediments and other solids remaining on the ground should be swept or vacuumed up immediately so they don't wash into the stormdrain system.

For any questions on disposal of waste, contact the Pinellas County Department of Solid Waste Operations at (727) 464-7500.

For information or to report illegal dumping, please call (727) 464-4425, e-mail [watershed@pinellascounty.org](mailto:watershed@pinellascounty.org) or visit [www.pinellas.wateratlas.usf.edu/StormwaterEd](http://www.pinellas.wateratlas.usf.edu/StormwaterEd)

24-hour hotline: (727) 464-5060 (non-emergency spills only)

Emergencies: Please contact your local fire department.



## Who To Contact: