

Best Management Practices for Mobile Washers:

When cleaning areas where trash and recycling are contained and stored, such as trash enclosures, or when cleaning individual cans, containers, and dumpsters, the wastewater must be collected and discharged to the sanitary sewer. Floor mats may not be cleaned in an outside area where wash water may flow to a street, gutter, catch basin, storm drain, or waterway. Carpet cleaning waste fluids may not be discharged to the street or storm drain. Wastewater containing soap, but not solvents, may be discharged to the sanitary sewer.

Use a combination of the following methods to protect waterways and the Monterey Bay from pollution:

Avoid using soap

Even biodegradable soap is harmful to the environment. Before you use soap, test to see whether hot water under pressure will do the job.

Use dry cleanup methods

In many cases you can eliminate the need to collect and/or divert wash water, if you follow this two-step process:

1. Use absorbents to clean up greasy or oily spills. Effective absorbents include rags, absorbent mats or pads, rice hull ash, cat litter, vermiculite, or sand.
2. Sweep or vacuum up the saturated absorbent material and dispose of it according to local, solid waste regulations.

Screen wash water

When cleaning surfaces such as buildings and decks without loose paint, sidewalks, or plazas *without soap*, pass the wash water through a 20 mesh or finer screen to capture the material, that could enter storm drains or remain in the gutter or street after cleaning. Dispose of screened material according to local, solid waste regulations.

Collect wash water

A simple and acceptable method for collecting wash water on private property requires only a drain plug, small sump pump, and a length of hose. If a small parking lot-type catch basin is available:

1. Remove the grate, plug the drain (usually 2-4 inches in diameter), and;
2. Place the pump in the catch basin, attached to a garden hose;
3. As the wash water drains to this lowest spot, pump to landscaping, a sewer line cleanout, or a container for later disposal to the sewer.

Vacuum booms are another option for capturing and collecting wash water.

Direct wash water to landscaping

When routing wash water to landscaping, gage the slope and area to ensure that no runoff will reach the street or gutter. If the soil is very dry, wet it down thoroughly before discharging the wash water, so that it will soak into the soil instead of running off to the street, gutter, or storm drain. Restrictions apply in the City of Santa Cruz.

Block storm drains or contain wash water

- Sandbags can be used to create a barrier around storm drains
- Plugs or rubber mats can be used to seal storm drain openings
- Vacuum boom, containment pads, or temporary berms can also be used to keep wash water away from the street, gutter, or storm drain

Dispose of hazardous materials properly

- Be sure to read cleaning product labels before disposing of wash water and follow all use and disposal instructions.
- Check with the city or county environmental health department to find out how small businesses can dispose of hazardous waste at a drop-off event, as opposed to using a hazardous waste hauler.