



LOW RISK DISCHARGE GUIDANCE: **DISCHARGES FROM SURFACE COSMETIC POWER WASHING** **OPERATIONS TO LAND** **JULY 2010**

This discharge guidance has been developed in accordance with the WQP-27, Low Risk Discharges and addresses the discharge of surface cosmetic power wash wastewater (wastewater) to land, i.e., permeable areas. The Division has not developed a general permit for this type of discharge, and is instead managing the discharge through the development of guidance. When the provisions of this guidance are met, the Division will not actively pursue permitting or enforcement for this category of discharges, unless on a case-by-case basis the Division finds that a discharge has resulted in pollution or degradation of state waters. This low risk guidance replaces the Division's current power washing guidance document.

Surface cosmetic power washing (power washing) is the washing of surfaces exposed to precipitation, through the application of water only, and includes the use of transportable equipment to wash various surfaces. Discharges to land from power washing are a type of industrial activity that are typically short term and of small volume that, with proper management, are not expected to contain pollutants in concentrations that are toxic or in concentrations that would cause or contribute to a violation of a groundwater water quality standard. A large number of these types of discharges occur state-wide every day. Permitting these discharges is resource intensive and does not result in a clear general benefit to environmental quality.

Discharges from power washing operations to surface waters, including irrigation ditches, are not included in the scope of this guidance document. This includes discharges that reach surface waters either directly or through conveyance systems. Conveyance systems include but are not limited to streets, curb and gutter, inlets, ditches, open channels, etc. The Division is evaluating these discharges separately because they pose a significantly greater potential for causing or contributing to a violation of a surface water quality standards. This is because the transport pathway for these discharges is much more direct and the pollutant potential is higher relative to the more stringent standards for aquatic life that apply.

The following conditions must be met by anyone discharging power washing wastewater to land:

- The discharges shall only be from the washing of surfaces exposed to precipitation such as building exteriors, outdoor parking lots, sidewalks, patio areas, and exteriors of vehicles (except for vehicles beds, chutes, or other surfaces used for containing or transferring materials).
- The discharge shall not be from washing activities associated with spills that require reporting pursuant to 25-8-601(2), C.R.S. Refer to Division Policy WQE-10 for additional information. The Policy is available online at www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/WhatsNew/SpillGuidanceDocument.pdf or by contacting the Division.
- Discharges to permeable stormwater conveyances such as swales and dry detention basins is allowed only when the following additional requirements can be met:
 - The permeable conveyance is designed to handle the amount of water being discharged and all water shall soak into the permeable area, i.e. cannot be conveyed or transported to surface water during future storm events.
 - No standing or flowing water can be in the permeable conveyance at the time of discharge.

- This provision does not apply to irrigation ditches including dry irrigation ditches, as irrigation ditches are considered unclassified state waters.
- Discharges to permeable stormwater conveyances must meet all other conditions of this guidance.
- All water shall soak into the land.
- The addition of chemicals and detergents to the wash water or to the discharge is strictly prohibited.
- Floating or solid materials shall not be evident in the discharge.
- A visible sheen shall not be evident in the discharge.
- The discharge shall not be harmful to vegetation.
- The discharge shall not cause erosion of a land surface.
- The discharge shall not occur during a stormwater runoff event.
- The wastewater may reach the street, curb flow line, impermeable channels, or other open impermeable areas provided that it remains in the operators' control and is immediately collected (including all deposited pollutants) for discharge in accordance with all conditions of this guidance.
 - All discharges must comply with the lawful requirements of federal agencies, municipalities, counties, drainage districts, and other local agencies regarding any discharges to storm drain systems, conveyances, or other water courses under their jurisdiction.

The following Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be followed, as necessary, by anyone discharging power washing wastewater to land. These BMPs have been developed by the Division to help ensure that the discharge will not negatively affect water quality.

- All BMPs used to meet the provisions of this guidance document must be selected, installed, implemented and maintained according to good engineering, hydrologic and pollution control practices. These BMPs must be adequately designed to provide control for all potential pollutant sources associated with the discharge of power washing wastewater to land.
- Solids and any pooled liquids other than stormwater should be removed from the surface to be cleaned prior to power washing.
- A filter bag or similar filtration device should be used to remove any suspended solids. This device should be used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers specifications.
- An absorbent oil pad, boom or similar device should be used to eliminate any oil from the discharge water.
- The discharge should be applied at a rate to minimize ponding so there is no potential for the water to flow to a surface water.

The following are alternatives to discharging under this guidance and are options for disposing of power washing wastewater:

- Contact the local wastewater treatment facility to determine whether or not discharge of the wash water to the sanitary sewer system is allowed. If discharge to the sanitary sewer is approved by the wastewater treatment facility, collect the wash water and send it to the sanitary sewer system in accordance with the requirements of the wastewater treatment facility.
- Collect the wash water and dispose of it appropriately at a disposal facility.
- Remove solids and any pooled liquids prior to washing, fully contain the wash water on an impervious area, and allow it to completely evaporate. This activity must be conducted under the control of the operator, and in a manner that prevents any potential discharge to a storm sewer or other conveyance to a surface water.
- Apply for coverage under a CDPS Individual Permit.

Contact Information:

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