

## Washwater Discharges From Vehicle Washing

Water used in washing cars, trucks, and other equipment may contain a wide range of contaminants including oil, other hydrocarbons, metals, detergents, road salt, and grit. These pollutants can be toxic and harmful to living organisms, including fish and the people who eat the fish. It is important to keep these contaminants out of our surface and drinking water. **The Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) policy** (dated 12/09/02) **covers only the washwater generated from washing the exterior of vehicles** (cars, trucks, buses, and light or heavy equipment). It supersedes the parts of the "DEC's Floor Drain Procedure" (signed October 8, 1993) that refer to Vehicle washing.

There are four options for handling your vehicle washwater:

### 1) Install a closed system with no discharge

Operate a "closed loop system" by recycling your washwater. Because no wastewater is discharged to the ground's subsurface or surface, this would not require a UIC permit. However, if it includes a holding tank, the tank will need to be permitted by the DEC Regional Office in your area.

### 2) Install a holding tank

Install a holding tank to collect the washwater from the floor drain and have the contents disposed of properly. Holding tanks can be installed and pumped out as needed by a qualified hauler. The holding tank contents must be disposed of at an approved disposal facility (i.e. a municipal wastewater treatment facility.) Holding tanks require a permit from the DEC Regional Wastewater Office in your area (see contact info on back). The town may also need to approve the disposal at its wastewater treatment facility.

### 3) Discharge to municipal sanitary sewer

Connections to the local wastewater treatment facility must be permitted by the Regional Offices and may require adequate pretreatment (e.g. an oil/water separator.) The town may also have an approval process for connections to its wastewater treatment facility.

### 4) Limit washings to 30 or fewer vehicles per week

If the following conditions are met, the washwater from 30 or fewer vehicle washings per week may be discharged to the **ground surface**.

A) Whether these vehicle washings occur indoors or outside, the following conditions must be met:

- i. The washwater going to the ground surface must sheet flow over a vegetated area and infiltrate or evaporate on-site, therefore the site should not be graded in a way that encourages the collection of the washwater.
- ii. The washwater must not cause soil erosion and must not reach waters of the state, either directly or through stormwater drains or ditches.
- iii. Only non-phosphorus soaps may be used.
- iv. The use of acids, bases, metal brighteners and degreasing agents as well as pressure washing engines, undercarriage washing and engine cleaning are all prohibited.

## Environmental Fact Sheet: Washwater Discharges From Vehicle Washing

- B) If the vehicle washing takes place indoors (discharging to ground surface), the following **additional** conditions must be met:
- i. All washing must occur in a wash bay that has a floor drain and is physically separated from where vehicles are serviced.
  - ii. An oil-water separator must be installed on the floor drain piping.
  - iii. The floor drain must be registered with the UIC program (call the UIC Program, 802-241-3822).
  - iv. Hazardous materials can't be stored in the wash area unless adequate containment is provided.
- C) If the vehicle washing takes place outside; the following **additional** conditions must be met:
- i. Whenever possible, the washing should occur on an impermeable surface (i.e. concrete, asphalt, plastic, or other) and then sheet flow over a vegetated area.

Regardless of which option you chose, remember:

**If there is ever a hazardous spill to a floor drain or to the ground and there is a potential for groundwater contamination or the contents of a holding tank is in question, contact the Hazardous Spills Hotline 1-800-641-5005 for assistance.**

**For more information, contact:**

### **Wastewater Management Division**

Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program  
103 South Main Street - Sewing Building  
Waterbury, VT 05671-0405  
Telephone: 802-241-3822  
Fax: 802-241-2596

### **DEC Regional Wastewater Offices**

Barre: .....	5 Perry Street, Suite 80 .....	802-479-0190 .....	fax: 479-4272
Essex: .....	111 West Street .....	802-879-5656 .....	fax: 879-3871
Springfield: ..	100 Mineral Sreet, Suite 303 .....	802-885-8855 .....	fax: 885-8890
Rutland: .....	450 Asa Bloomer State Building ...	802-786-5900 .....	fax: 786-5915
St. Johnsbury:	184 Portland Street .....	802-751-0130 .....	fax: 748-6687