

# STATE OF COLORADO

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## **DRAFT** **LOW RISK DISCHARGE GUIDANCE:** **DISCHARGES FROM SURFACE COSMETIC POWER WASHING** **OPERATIONS TO LAND** **AUGUST 2009**

This discharge guidance has been developed in accordance with the WQP-27, Low Risk Discharges. The Division has not developed a general permit for the discharge of surface cosmetic power washing wastewater to land, 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 policy replaces the Division's current power washing guidance document.

Cosmetic power washing is considered the washing of surfaces exposed to precipitation and includes the use of transportable equipment to wash various surfaces, through the application of water. 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, which requires a resource intensive effort to permit, without resulting in a clear general benefit to environmental quality.

Due to the wide variety of potential pollutant sources in the discharge depending upon the surfaces that are being washed, discharges from power washing operations is not allowed to reach surface waters either directly or through conveyance systems, including but not limited to streets, curb and gutter, inlets, borrow ditches, open channels, etc. The best option for disposing of power washing wastewater is to send it to a sanitary sewer, which requires the permission of the wastewater treatment facility. This guidance document addresses the discharge of surface cosmetic power washing wastewater to land.

The following practices must be implemented by anyone discharging power washing wastewater to land with vegetative cover:

- 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, shoots, 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](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/WhatsNew/SpillGuidanceDocument.pdf) or by contacting the Division.
- The addition of chemicals and detergents to the discharge is strictly prohibited.
- The discharge shall not result in discharge to gutters, borrow ditches, storm sewers, other surface water conveyances, or surface waters. All water must soak into the vegetated land surface. The discharge must not contain floating or solid materials.

- A visible sheen must not be evident in the discharge.
- The discharge must not be harmful to vegetation.
- The discharge shall not cause erosion of a land surface.

The following best management practices (BMPs) should be followed by anyone discharging power washing wastewater to land with vegetated cover. These BMPs have been developed by the Division to help ensure that the discharge will not negatively affect water quality.

- All Best Management Practices (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 uncontaminated groundwater to land.
- Solids and any pooled liquids other than stormwater should be removed from the area prior to power washing.
- A filter bag or similar filtration device should be used to remove 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 storm sewer or other conveyance to surface waters.

The following are alternatives for disposing of power washing wastewater:

- Collect the wash water and send it the sanitary sewer. Contact the local wastewater treatment facility prior to discharging to the sanitary sewer to ensure that the facility is able to accept the discharge. Note: the wastewater treatment facility operator may apply additional restrictions.
- 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.

#### **Contact Information:**

Questions regarding this action should be forwarded to Nicole Rolfe at: [nicole.rolfe@state.co.us](mailto:nicole.rolfe@state.co.us)