



## City of Valdosta Engineering Department *Stormwater Division*

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### MOBILE CAR WASH / POWER WASH

#### WHAT IS A MOBILE CAR / POWER WASH?

A mobile car / power wash uses a high pressure water system to clean vehicles and equipment. Water, detergents, degreasers, and other products are used for mobile car / power washing. Washing activities can include the following:

- **Transportation—related washing:** Cars, trucks, lunch wagons, food carts, etc
- **Surface washing:** Buildings, dumpster pads, parking lots, sidewalks, alleys, etc

#### WHY IS MOBILE CAR / POWER WASH DISCHARGE A CONCERN?

Mobile car / power washing, including washing using water only, creates wash water (wastewater). Washing vehicles / equipment outdoors or in areas where wastewater flows onto surfaces where it cannot soak in, such as in concrete areas, can cause the wastewater to flow into storm drains. Since storm drains discharge directly to our local waterways, this results in untreated wastewater entering our creeks, rivers, and lakes.

Wastewater can contain high concentrations of oil and grease, food particles, and detergents that may contain phosphates and suspended solids. Detergents, even bio-degradable detergents, can be poisonous to fish. Phosphates, an ingredient in some detergents, are plant nutrients that can cause excessive algae growth when it enters our streams and lakes. Car / power washing also removes debris that may clog the stormwater system. Washing buildings or other items that are painted with lead-based paint is prohibited.

#### WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY MOBILE CAR / POWER WASH DISCHARGE?

Discharge of wastewater without a discharge permit is a violation of the Federal Clean Water Act and local ordinances. Please find below a couple of best management practices (BMPs) for mobile car / power washing:

- **Use a portable containment system to catch wastewater from transportation and surface washing.** This method uses submersible pumps that can pump the wastewater to a sanitary sewer or a holding tank to be hauled off site and disposed of properly.
- **Prevent wastewater from discharging into the stormwater system.** Transportation and surface washing should be performed in grassy, vegetated, or gravel areas so that the wastewater can seep into the ground. Do not wash outdoors on saturated ground or on days when rain is probable. Items should not be washed over storm drains, on paved areas, or any area that drains to the stormwater system.

#### DO I NEED A PERMIT FOR MY MOBILE CAR / POWER WASH DISCHARGE?

Permits are not required at this time; however, compliance will be enforced through the City's ordinance system. Any commercial enterprise performing work for the public in the City must have a valid business license. To apply for a business license, contact the Business License Office at 102 N. Lee St, Valdosta, GA 31601 or call (229) 259-3520.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
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