

Best Management Practices for Mobile Commercial Cosmetic Cleaners



The City of Fort Worth has provided a guide which describes the requirements that must be followed by all Mobile Commercial Cosmetic Cleaning Users. This guide provides examples of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and proper ways to dispose of wastewater generated by the cosmetic cleaning activity. This guide and its requirements apply to anyone operating within the City of Fort Worth's limits.

All employees engaged in cosmetic cleaning activities must be knowledgeable about the discharge limitations listed in this guide and must use appropriate BMPs.

What is Mobile Commercial Cosmetic Cleaning?

The city's Stormwater Ordinance defines mobile commercial cosmetic cleaning as, "power washing, steam cleaning, and any other mobile cosmetic cleaning operation, of vehicles and/or exterior surfaces, engaged in for commercial purposes." Cosmetic Cleaning, also known as Pressure Washing or Power Washing, is the use of a high pressure water spray used to clean a variety of surfaces and objects. Heated water or soaps and detergents may be used during this process.

Cosmetic Cleaning can be used to clean the following:

- Parking lots
- Exterior of buildings
- Vehicles
- Roofs
- Graffiti
- Decks
- Boat docks
- Sidewalks
- Equipment

Best Management Practices activities include but are not limited to:

- Pre-cleaning liquid accumulations of oil or grease with absorbent clay or a similar material prior to washing. The oil-soaked clay should be placed in a plastic bag and disposed to a dumpster.
- If wash water meets the requirements of one of the exemptions listed in the following pages and can be discharged to the storm drain, then storm drain entrances must be screened to catch leaves and other debris. Environmental Quality Division recommends using a 20 (840 micron or finer) mesh or screen over the storm drain inlet. The debris may be placed in a dumpster after it has dried.
- If your wash water can be discharged to the storm drain, it must pass through an oil absorbent boom or pad so no oil sheen is present in the discharge.
- All wash water that does not meet the requirements of the exemptions must be collected before it leaves the property and it is up to you to determine the best method of confining the wash water on property. You may choose to use a stationary boom teamed with a sump pump or wet vacuum, a vacuum boom system or some other method.
- Regardless of the method you choose, you must not let any wash water escape the property and enter the storm drain system.

Discharges of wash water

- You must have permission from the property owner before discharging wash water to the sanitary sewer. All discharges to the sanitary sewer must be free of grease, grit or any other substance that could possibly clog the pipe. Environmental Quality recommends filtering the wash water through a 400 micron filter before discharging. The wastes left in the filter may be placed in a dumpster after drying.
- Discharges to the sanitary sewer must not have a temperature greater than 150° F, must not have a pH less than 5.0 or greater than 12.0.
- Discharges to the sanitary sewer must not contain pollutants which could create fire or explosion hazards.
- Discharges into manholes are strictly forbidden, no matter where they are located. It is illegal and dangerous to remove the lid from a manhole.



Wash Water recycling units

All permit holders that use wash water recycling units **must**:

- List all sanitary sewer discharge locations and other disposal sites.
- Supply a map showing the exact location of these discharge points.
- Notify Environmental Quality of all changes in disposal sites used during the permit term.
- Discharge wash water into the sanitary sewer only at those sites described in the permit application.
- The sample must be tested for oil and grease, cyanide, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, silver, and zinc at least once during each permit term. Testing methods are specified by the supervisor of the Industrial Waste Section of the Wastewater Treatment Division of the Fort Worth Water Department. Call 817-871-8305 for more details on testing methods.
- Report the results of such tests to the Industrial Waste Section of the Wastewater Treatment Division of the Fort Worth Water Department.

Criminal penalty for illicit discharge

- A person commits an offense, punishable by a fine of up to \$2,000 per day per offense, if he introduces or causes to be introduced any discharge to the storm drain system that is not composed entirely of storm-water.
- There are some defenses to this rule, including runoff from lawn sprinklers, surfacing groundwater and fire fighting water.
- Cosmetic cleaners may use the following defense:
- Claim that discharge or flow from cold water used in cosmetic cleaning is not contaminated with any soap, detergent, degreaser, solvent, emulsifier, dispersant or any other cleaning substance.
- This defense also applies to discharges using hot water cosmetic cleaning without any of the mentioned contaminants provided that permission is granted by Code Compliance-Environmental Quality Division prior to using the hot water. Hot water is defined as any water over 110°F. Remember, any discharge must be screened for debris and must pass through an oil boom or oil absorbent pad before it enters the storm drain system.



For more information or questions contact the City of Fort Worth
Code Compliance Department Environmental Quality Division
by phone at 817-392-1234 or email CosmeticCleaner@fortworthtexas.gov.

QUESTIONS?

Customer Call Center: 817-392-1234
CosmeticCleaner@fortworthtexas.gov
www.FortWorthTexas.gov/env