

Community Partners for Clean Streams Monthly eMonitor



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Up Front

The eMonitor is designed to keep our Partners and friends updated on CPCS, stormwater management issues, provide helpful information to reduce stormwater and nonpoint source pollution, recognize new Partners, highlight upcoming events, and create networking opportunities. We hope you enjoy each edition of the Monthly eMonitor and welcome any comments, concerns, or suggestions.

Why is Pressure Washing a Water Quality Concern?

Given that it is the summer season, pressure washing to clean buildings, pavement, and other equipment is on the rise. Even though pressure washing is very effective, it can have negative environmental effects if the resulting wash water is not managed and disposed of in the proper fashion.



When pressure washing is done it can dislodge pollutants such as paint chips, sealants, and/or automotive fluids. These pollutants are often times washed into local drainage systems that lead directly into surface waters. Rivers and streams can become polluted with the acids and other elements that are used and/or dislodged by pressure washing. Any pollutants that enter surface waters run the risk of having negative effects on aquatic life and leading to both environmental and health concerns.

This issue of the eMonitor covers the importance proper pressure washing practices, and it provides tips on how to manage the wash water that is left behind.

Alternate Ways to Clean

There are a couple techniques that can be used as alternatives to high pressure washing. Using these methods may decrease the need and/or length of time necessary for pressure washing.

Turn Down the Volume



- Whenever possible, use dry cleaning methods before choosing to pressure wash.

A few dry cleaning options are:

- 1) Absorbents: to soak/clean up oil spots and spills
- 2) Brooms: to sweep up trash/debris/dirt
- 3) Wire Brushes: to scrape off debris/dirt to be swept

Surface pre-cleaning is a great way to reduce costs and simplify the wastewater disposal process. Less water is needed when pre-cleaning is done and there will be less debris in the wash water to worry about disposing.

- Minimizing the amount of water used during pressure washing activities can be accomplished by turning down the pressure level. After pre-cleaning, less pressure is required. As a result, there will be less wastewater to dispose of and a smaller risk of endangering the environment.

Clean Up the Solids

After power washing, any sediment, dirt, or other solids that remain on the ground should be cleaned up immediately. This is done in order to prevent these potential pollutants from blowing or washing away and entering surface waters.

Once you have collected these solids, you can contact your trash hauler or a local disposal facility to determine the best process for disposal.



Do You Need a Permit?



If your business is one that washes equipment or vehicles outdoors, you are subject to the State of Michigan Permit requirements. In accordance with the permit and in order to ensure environmental safety and health, vehicles not washed indoors should be taken to commercial washing facilities.

If vehicles are washed outdoors it is important to designate a wash area, minimize the amount of runoff, manage the waste water properly, and follow the pressure washing suggestions above.

Tips for Managing Wash Water

Here are several tips on the proper ways to manage any waste wash water produced by power washing activities.

Planning Ahead

Before beginning pressure washing activities it is important to do the following:

- Determine what collection method you will be using and how you intend to properly dispose of the wastewater generated from each cleaning activity.
- Obtain any necessary permits
- Identify the specific location where you will be disposing wastewater.



Temporarily Blocking Storm Drains

In order to contain wastewater runoff and prevent it from entering surface waters, it is useful to temporarily cover storm drains when power washing. Then this water can be pumped or diverted from the storm drain into a sanitary sewer system.

Be sure to remove any debris and always reopen the storm drain once you're task is completed.



Water Diversion

Another alternative is to divert the wash water into a nearby lawn or other vegetated area. This allows the water to filter into the ground where contaminants can be neutralized. However, if you choose this method be sure to use **water only**. If any cleaning products are in the wash water that enters the ground, you run the risk of these chemicals entering the drinking water supply. Temporarily blocking storm drains and/or dry cleaning methods are preferred.



What to Avoid

It is very important to avoid the following:

- Never discharge your power washing wash water into a roadside ditch. These ditches are connected to storm water management systems and drain directly into local rivers and streams.
- Avoid using acids and other harsh cleaners. Ask about less toxic options when buying cleaning products.



CPCS News

New Community Partners

Welcome to our new partners this month and thank you to our renewed ones. Together we can make a difference to keep Washtenaw County's waterways clean!



New Partners

Washtenaw County Facilities Management Division

Renewing Partners

Thomson-Shore, Inc.
Three-Oaks Group
Pierce Lake Golf Course

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital
Buhr Park Pool & Ice Arena

Upcoming CPCS Events

Huron River Days- Sunday July 12th

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