

MOBILE CLEANER TRAINING AND RECOGNITION: Introduction

Box:

Key definitions:

Sanitary sewer system: Pipes carrying wastewater from homes and businesses to the local wastewater treatment plant

Storm drain system: Pipes carrying rainwater or other runoff from outdoor surfaces to local creeks, bays, or the ocean – with no treatment

Cleanout: Usually a capped pipe on the building exterior, connected to the sanitary sewer

Who can be recognized?

- Mobile surface cleaners
- Mobile vehicle cleaning/detailing service providers
- Mobile carpet and upholstery cleaners

What types of cleaning are eligible for recognition?

- Flat work
- Building exteriors
- Sidewalks and plazas
- Parking lots and drive-throughs
- Auto washing/detailing
- Truck washing
- Fleet washing
- Carpet and upholstery cleaning

Why is recognition important?

The Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association (BASMAA) mobile cleaners recognition program is designed to show cleaners how to do their work in ways that protect water quality in our local creeks, bays, and the Pacific Ocean – while staying within the law. ***In California, any discharge of a pollutant to a storm drain is illegal.*** Cleaners and their customers are liable if pollution results from cleaning activities on private (or public) property.

BASMAA encourages local governments and businesses to hire *only* recognized cleaners. Re-recognition is required annually.

Best Management Practices for Vehicle Cleaners / Detailers

Note: Local governments generally accept these best management practices, however there are exceptions so before bidding on or starting a new job, check with the local stormwater and wastewater authority ([click here](#)) where the job is located to make sure you are following their best management practices and disposal requirements.

The goal of these BMPs is to keep pollution out of the storm drain system.

In order to do the job right, remember these simple concepts:

1. Wipe, dust, sweep, or vacuum to remove dirt and debris before cleaning surfaces with water. Dispose in trash.
2. Use absorbents (kitty litter, absorbent mats or “pigs,” sand, etc.) to soak up oil and grease. Dispose as hazardous waste.
3. Whenever possible clean without soap (even biodegradable soap pollutes!) or other chemicals.
4. Be sure that any cleaning water containing soap, dirt, trash, oil, grease, or any chemical does NOT enter a storm drain.

Before you clean vehicles with any soap or chemical cleaner

1. Check with the local wastewater authority ([click here](#)) or municipal treatment plant operator to determine what types of wastewater you may discharge to the sanitary sewer.
2. If the wastewater authority will accept your waste, obtain permission from the property owner to discharge cleaning wastewater to a cleanout, sink, or toilet.
 - If the wastewater authority will NOT accept your waste, arrange to either pretreat it to remove pollutants, or have it disposed as hazardous waste.
3. Locate and block or cover all storm drains inlets downslope of your cleaning location. Set up a temporary sump or berm arrangement that will allow you to wet-vac or pump washwater to a tank for disposal.
4. If you are washing or detailing multiple vehicles, use booms to set up a temporary wash pad with booms or berms, so that you can collect and properly dispose of washwater. Sweep the area before you begin washing.
5. Vacuum vehicle floor mats or shake dirt and debris into a trash can.

Block nearby and down-slope storm drains and collect wastewater

- Use rubber mats, sand bags, absorbent “pigs,” or inflatable berms to make a sump where you can pump wastewater out with a wet vac or sump pump.
- Dispose of collected water to the sanitary sewer, as you have arranged with the property owner and the wastewater treatment plant.
- Remove storm drain protection and other devices (e.g. sand bags, inflatable berms, absorbent pigs, etc.) when the job is complete. Remove all debris or sediment accumulated during washing activities and put in the trash, or it is hazardous, dispose of it properly.

Dispose of wash/wastewater to a cleanout or indoor drain (sanitary sewer) – with the following exceptions:

- Discharge washwater to landscaping if all of the following apply:
 - You have the property owner's permission
 - The quantity you will discharge will not flood the landscaped area or run off
 - Water was used to clean vehicles without soap
 - ✓ Note that water containing soap, chemicals, or oil/grease can harm plants
- Dispose of wastewater containing hazardous materials, and any hazardous waste, appropriately (check with the local waste treatment authority)
 - Wastewater containing solvents, such as from engine degreasing
 - Oil-saturated absorbents
 - Acid wash must be neutralized to pH between 6 and 10 before discharge to the sanitary sewer
 - ✓ Tip: Read the label on any chemical cleaning product to find out if it's hazardous
 - ✓ Tip: Clean engines away from the area where you are washing vehicles