VERMONT

State of Vermont
Department of Environmental Conservation

Agency of Natural Resources

Issued - 12/9/2002
Revised – 5/6/2009

Department Of Conservation
Wastewater Management Division
Practice Regarding Washwater Discharges from Vehicle Washing

Water used in washing cars, trucks, and other equipment may contain a wide range of contaminants including oil, other hydrocarbons, metals, detergents, antifreeze, road salt, and grit. These pollutants can be toxic and harmful to living organisms, including fish and the people who eat the fish. It is important to keep these contaminants out of our drinking water. We have developed this guidance for discharging washwater generated from washing the exterior of vehicles and equipment such as cars and/or trucks and light or heavy equipment to protect Vermont's drinking water. **This policy covers only the washwater generated from washing the exterior of vehicles.** If, at any time, there is a spill down the floor drain or on to the surface of the ground and the groundwater is contaminated or the contents of a holding tank is considered hazardous the Department of Environmental Conservation should be contacted.

There are four options (see below for more information):

1. Operate a closed loop system with wastewater recycling (no discharge of wastewater to the subsurface or ground surface.)

2. Install a holding tank to collect the washwater from the floor drain and have the contents disposed of properly.

3. Discharge to a municipal sanitary sewer.

4. Wash 30 or fewer vehicles per week and discharge to the ground surface.

1. <u>Closed System with No Discharge</u>

This does not require a permit. However, it may require a holding tank that will need to be permitted by the DEC Regional Office in your area.

2. <u>Install a holding tank</u>

Holding tanks can be installed and pumped out as needed by a qualified hauler. The discharges must be collected and disposed of at an approved disposal facility (i.e. a wastewater treatment facility.) Holding tanks require a permit by the DEC Regional Office in your area.

3. <u>Discharge to Municipal Sanitary Sewer</u>

Connections to the local wastewater treatment facility are permitted by the Regional Offices and may require adequate pretreatment (e.g. an oil/water separator.)

4. Wash 30 or Fewer Vehicles per Week

A. The wastewater from washing 30 or fewer vehicles per week may be discharged onto the surface of the ground. All washwater must sheet flow over a vegetated area and infiltrate or evaporate on site. The site should not be graded in a manner that would encourage collection of the washwater. The washwater must not reach waters of the state, either directly or through stormwater drains or drainage ditches. Only non-phosphorous based soap is allowed. **Pressure washing or other methods of undercarriage washing or engine cleaning are prohibited.** The use of acids, bases, metal brighteners and degreasing agents are prohibited.

B. Indoor vehicle washing:

All indoor vehicle washing must occur in a wash bay that is physically separated from any maintenance areas. No hazardous materials can be stored in the area with the floor drain. An oil-water separator must be installed. The floor drain must be registered with the Department of Environmental Conservation. The floor drain can daylight as long as the discharge does not erode the ground surface downslope of the discharge pipe and complies with the restrictions noted above. Sheet flow across a vegetated area must be achieved below the discharge pipe. Unless this is a pre-existing use, a Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Permit is required. The permit should include the requirements noted above in A.

C. Outdoor vehicle washing:

All outdoor vehicle washing should occur, where possible, on an impermeable surface (i.e. concrete, asphalt, plastic or other.) From the impermeable surface, washwater must be directed as sheet flow to a vegetated area and away from waters of the state, storm water drains and drainage ditches. The discharge must comply with the restrictions noted above.