



City of Cañon City

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Special Business Edition July, 2010 Stormwater Management Program News

This special edition will address the issue of power washing parking lots, sidewalks and buildings. There seems to have been some confusion about this issue, so I felt that a special edition for businesses was needed.

Power washing of parking lots, buildings and sidewalks by a business owner, manager, or employee, or by a contracted company, is prohibited by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Water Quality Control Division (CDPHE WQCD) and by the City of Cañon City ordinance *unless certain requirements are met.*

The CDPHE considers water generated by power washing operations as a “process wastewater” which requires a Colorado Discharge Permit in order to be discharged to any body of water within the state. This also includes irrigation ditches and laterals and ditches that are normally dry. **Unless a company has a Colorado Discharge Permit, any discharge of wash water from power washing to a body of water, either directly or via a storm sewer is considered an illegal discharge and may incur a fine.**

Why is power washing prohibited unless certain requirements are met?

The water generated by power or pressure washing, including just hosing down a paved area, picks up any dirt, automotive fluids, trash, chemicals, metal traces, landscaping waste, etc. and carries it to the nearest street where it enters the storm sewer system. This contaminated water is then discharged to the Arkansas River and Four Mile Creek. It is **not** treated before entering the river or creek. This water is considered an “illicit discharge”. An illicit discharge is anything other than stormwater entering the storm sewer system.

So how can I keep my parking lot, buildings and sidewalk clean?

The best alternative to power washing is to use dry absorbent material to soak up any spills such as oil, grease, chemicals, etc. and then sweep it up and dispose of it in the garbage. Dry sweeping of parking lots and sidewalks is the best way to ensure that contaminated water does not enter the storm sewer system. Sweepings should be placed in the garbage for disposal.

Can I power wash at all?

If you feel that power washing is still the method you need to use, the following requirements must be met:

1) All wastewater from the power washing must be trapped on your property and not allowed to run into the street or storm system. Water can then be allowed to evaporate and any residues swept up and disposed of in the garbage. If the property has drains which lead into the storm sewer system, they need to be blocked with rock bags or straw wattles to prevent the water from entering. These items can be purchased at your local hardware store. Some local contractors also sell these items.



2) Water can also be vacuumed up with a wet vac and disposed of in the sanitary sewer, *if you have permission from the wastewater treatment plant to dispose of it this way (i.e. Fremont Sanitation District)*. Again, the water cannot leave your property and run into the street or storm sewer system.

3) Water from power washing can be channeled into a vegetated area, providing there is nothing in the water that will harm the vegetation and that the water does not pool or spill over into the street.

The City of Cañon City's Municipal Code, Title 8 Health and Safety, Chapter 8.70 Stormwater Illicit Discharges and Permit Requirements, Section 8.70.050 Illicit discharge prohibited-Exemptions lists the following as prohibited discharges to our storm sewer system.

1. Chemicals, petroleum products, paint, varnishes, solvents, oil and grease and other automotive fluids, pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers, or other toxic materials;
2. Non-hazardous liquid, solid wastes and yard wastes;
3. Hazardous materials, sewage, fecal coliform and pathogens, dissolved and particulate metals;
4. Trash, refuse, rubbish, garbage, food wastes, pet wastes, litter, other discarded or abandoned objects, floatables and cleaning products;
5. Landscaping materials, sediment, lawn clippings, leaves, branches or other landscaping and yard debris;
6. Construction activities wastes and residues including but not limited to, painting, paving, concrete placement, sawcutting, material storage and earthwork;
7. **Wastes and residues that result from mobile washing operations**; discharges from toilets; sinks; industrial processes; cooling systems; boilers; fabric cleaning, equipment cleaning; commercial vehicle cleaning and substances added to the storm drain to control root growth;
8. Any other material that is considered harmful to humans, animals, or aquatic life and its habitat.

For more information on The City of Cañon City's Municipal Code concerning illicit discharges, please visit our website at www.canoncity.org. Click on Municipal Code & Charter, select Municipal Code, Title 8, Chapter 8.70. You may also visit the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's website at www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/PermitsUnit/POLICYGUIDANCEFACTSHEETS/.

Please feel free to direct any concerns or questions to Glenda DeBekker, City of Cañon City Stormwater Program at either grdebekker@canoncity.org or 276-5265. You may also write to The City of Cañon City's Stormwater Program, P.O. Box 1460, Cañon City, CO 81215-1460.