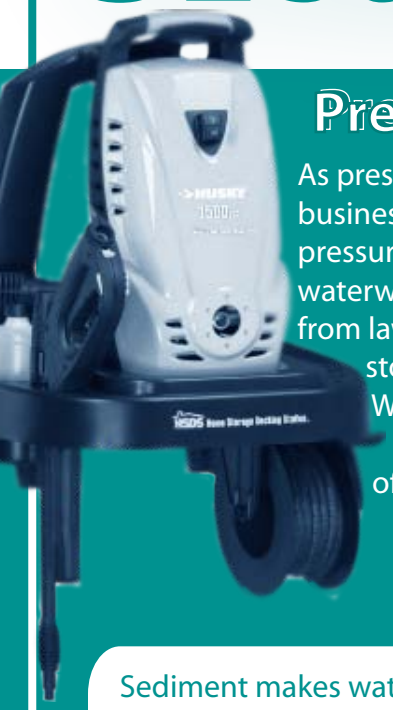
Clean Water At A Glance

pressure washing



Pressure Washing

As pressure washers become more affordable, they have gained popularity among businesses and homeowners. Although convenient for cleaning surfaces and machinery, pressure washing surfaces such as driveways and houses can release contaminants into local waterways. Residual motor oil from vehicle maintenance, soaps from car washing, fertilizers from lawns, and other contaminants are picked up by washwater and carried to storm drains. Once in the stormwater system this polluted water travels untreated to the Willamette and McKenzie rivers or into the groundwater. Polluted stormwater affects drinking water sources, which can compromise human health and raise treatment cost of drinking water.

How Pollutants Harm Water Quality

Sediment makes water cloudy and hinders aquatic plant growth. Sediment filled water can also clog fish gills, preventing respiration.

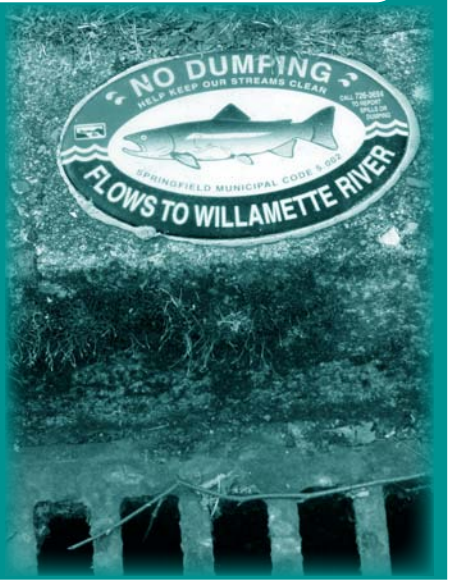
Soaps, even biodegradable varieties, can cause low oxygen levels in water. High nutrient levels occur in waterways from inputs of pet waste, fertilizer, and soaps. This can trigger algae blooms, creating deadly low-oxygen conditions for fish and other aquatic life. As well as make it unusable by humans.

Household hazardous wastes, like pesticides, paints, solvents, and auto fluids can poison aquatic life. Animals and people can become sick or die after consuming polluted water or fish.

Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas creating health hazards, making river closures necessary.

Regulations

Polluted discharges from any property that enter the local storm drain system are considered illicit discharge violations. It is the property owner's responsibility to prevent the entry of pollutants from cleaning activities from entering the stormwater system, even if someone else is hired to do the work.



CITY OF SPRINGFIELD STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The River Begins at Your Front Door

Water Pollution Problem Reporting Hotline
telephone: (541) 726-3694
online at: www.ci.springfield.or.us/ESD/complaints

SPRINGFIELD

Prevent Pollution with Best Management Practices

To prevent polluted discharges from leaving your property use best management practices (BMPs). These are simple steps that you, or someone you hire, can follow to keep pollutants out of the stormwater system. Here's how you can use BMPs to prevent stormwater pollution:

Remember to NEVER use soaps, detergents, chemicals, steam, or heated water while pressure washing if runoff is to enter the stormwater system. If water will not enter the stormwater system use biodegradeable soap sparingly, when necessary. Remember to make sure contractors also use safe practices.

Paved Areas and Sidewalks

Use dry cleanup methods first, such as sweeping, vacuuming, or blowing into piles. Dispose of debris in the trash. Do not allow runoff to enter the stormwater system.

Use absorbents (cat litter, sawdust, sand) to clean up oily spots or other fluids before washing. This, too, can go in the trash.

Block the gutter or storm drain with a boom or absorbent sock (see picture) to filter runoff. If possible, direct flow to a lawn or landscaped areas where there is no runoff to the storm system.

Building Surfaces, Wood Decks, etc.

Use the 3 BMPs above. (Sweep, absorb, and block)

Use tarps or sheets to collect debris and dispose of properly. Keep in mind that paint on older buildings may contain lead and should be disposed of as hazardous waste. Call Lane County Waste Management for details (682-4120).

Use a shop-vac to collect washwater, if possible.

Vehicle Washing

Businesses washing new or used vehicles awaiting sale and businesses washing less than 8 vehicles per week are permitted as long as the use of soaps, detergents, heat or chemicals are not used when runoff flows to a storm drain.

Cleaning is restricted to the exterior of vehicle only and is never allowed for engines, transmissions, or undercarriages if water flows to the stormwater system. Wash these at a car wash.

Businesses exceeding the above limits must apply for a Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Wash Water Permit. Contact them at (503) 229-5696.

Vehicle Washing by private citizens is permitted, but it is recommended that vehicles be washed on a pervious area, such as a lawn, with biodegradable soap used sparingly, if at all.

Non-profit fund-raising groups are permitted once a month and should use the DEQ's recommended BMPs for washing activities. Call 726-3626 for BMP information and for details about borrowing a free Fish-Friendly Car Wash Kit from the City of Springfield.

For more information on BMPs and stormwater pollution prevention practices contact the following:

Stormwater regulations for the City of Springfield.....726-3694

Permission to discharge to the wastewater system in Springfield.....726-3693