

# The River Begins at Your Front Door

Stormwater management is an important part of the community's effort to improve water quality and protect fish habitat. Protecting our neighborhood streams, wetlands, and the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers begins at home. The Cities of Springfield and Eugene are working together to protect our waterways, **but we need your help. By using Best Management Practices every time you pressure wash, you are preventing pollution** and enhancing the habitat of fish and other organisms that live in our rivers and streams.

## 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.**

*Working together to protect our community's waterways*



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# Protect Our Rivers While You Wash

Your Guide to Environmentally Friendly Pressure Washing

# Best Management Practices

## Pressure Washing and Water Quality

As pressure washers become more affordable, they have gained popularity among businesses and homeowners. Although convenient, pressure washing surfaces such as driveways and houses can release contaminants into our rivers. Motor oil, soaps, fertilizers, 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 or McKenzie River, or into groundwater.**

*How does this impact our rivers?*

Sediment makes water cloudy, hinders aquatic plant growth, and can clog fish gills.

Pet waste, fertilizers, and soaps contain plant nutrients that can trigger algal blooms, which can create a dangerous low-oxygen environment for fish and other aquatic organisms.

Pressure washing vehicles and equipment can potentially dislodge metals, oils, and grease. These can poison aquatic life.

Do not use soaps, detergents, chemicals, steam, or heated water while pressure washing if runoff might enter a storm drain, street gutter, or waterway. If water will not enter the storm drain, biodegradable soap may be used sparingly and only when necessary.

**Follow these steps every time you pressure wash:**

1. Before pressure washing use dry cleanup methods. Sweep material into piles which can then be disposed of in the trash. Use absorbent materials such as cat litter, saw dust, and sand to clean up oil and other fluids. Absorbents can then go into the trash.
2. Block storm drains with oil-absorbent booms, socks or towels to filter runoff. If possible, direct flow from pressure washing to a lawn or landscaped area where there is no access to the storm drain.
3. After washing, clean up debris that may have been captured in your boom, absorbent sock or towel and dispose of it in the garbage.



## Tips for Special Projects

Use a sheet to collect paint chips of all types. Latex chips may go in the trash.

Paint on older buildings may contain lead and must be disposed of as hazardous waste.

Pressure washing is restricted to the exterior of the vehicle.

Never wash engines, transmissions, or undercarriages of vehicles if the wash water will enter the storm system. Wash these at a car wash.

Wash your vehicle on a lawn or gravel area if possible. Or, roll up several towels and place them at the front edge of your driveway to collect runoff.

