

MOBILE WASHING

What activities are covered by this fact sheet?

Cleaning of vehicles, equipment, buildings and mobile cleaning operations.

Is a permit needed for these activities?

Any person or business that discharges any wastewater into waters of the commonwealth is required to obtain a permit.

Can I operate a cleaning operation without a permit?

You do not need a permit if all wastewater is collected and reused, or is collected and discharged into a sanitary sewer system.

What is a sanitary sewer and do I need a permit to discharge into sanitary sewers?

A sanitary sewer is a network of underground pipes used to transport wastewater and sewage from homes or businesses to sewage treatment plants. You do not need a permit from DEP to discharge into sanitary sewers. However, you may need written permission from the municipal authority.

What is a storm sewer and do I need a permit to discharge into storm sewers?

A storm sewer is a system of roads, swales, pipes, inlets, roofs, parking lots, and other means of conveyance used to collect and carry rain water or snow/ice melt to rivers, lakes, streams and other types of surface waters. You cannot discharge wastewater into a storm sewer or into any waters of the commonwealth without obtaining a DEP permit.

I run a commercial high volume mobile operation. How can I obtain a permit to discharge to surface waters or groundwater?

The permitting section of your DEP regional field office can lead you through the process. However, service manufacturers have developed very efficient treatment and recycling equipment. You should consider these to increase the chance of obtaining a permit or avoiding the necessity of obtaining one.

Do non-profit organizations that hold car washes to raise money need a permit?

No, provided the wash water does not enter waters of the commonwealth and best management practices are used to keep the water out of storm sewers.

What are best management practices?

Diverting the wash water away from storm sewers and/or temporarily blocking the storm sewers during the washing are considered best management practices.

Do I need to collect all the wash water from a car lot where vehicles are stored prior to sale?

No, provided that the cleaning is restricted to the outside of the vehicles; not the engine or undercarriage. The wash water may not be discharged to waters of the commonwealth, and the water must be diverted away from storm sewers. Do not use solvents or degreasing agents.

If I am exempt from getting a permit, may I continue to operate even if my operation may be causing a groundwater problem?

Even though you may meet the exemptions discussed in this fact sheet, DEP may prohibit your operation if it determines that your operation is causing or may cause a problem. Alternately, DEP may require a different method of operation.

May I use chemicals (i.e., strong acids or caustics) to clean buildings?

Yes, as long as the wastewater is collected or otherwise prevented from entering waters of the commonwealth or storm sewers.

While cleaning buildings, if I am not using harsh chemicals, may I allow the wastewater to run off the property untreated?

If the wastewater contains solids, the water should be filtered or screened using straw bales or hardware cloth dams and the solids properly disposed.

May car washes and laundries discharge to onlot systems?

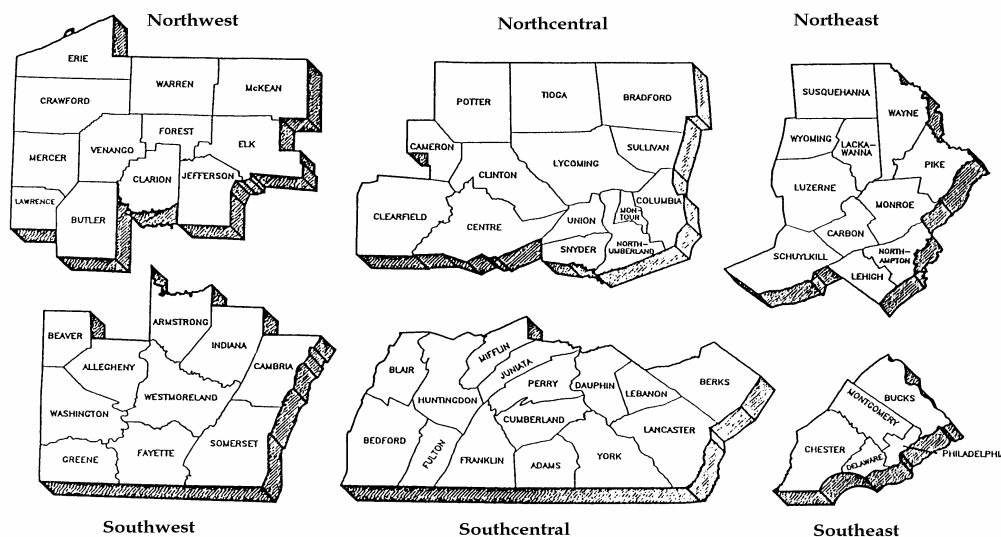
No, these are considered industrial wastes and may not be discharged to onlot systems.

Car washes and laundries need to do one of the following:

1. totally recycle wastewater with no discharge;
2. discharge to a municipal sewer system;
3. obtain an NPDES permit and construct treatment facilities; or
4. collect and transport all waste to approved treatment facilities.

For more information, visit www.depweb.state.pa.us, keyword: Wastewater.

For more information,
call the DEP regional office in your area or contact:
Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Water Standards and Facility Regulation
Division of Planning and Permits
P.O. Box 8774
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8774
(717) 787-8184



DEP Regional Offices

Northwest Region

230 Chestnut St.
Meadville, PA 16335-3481
Main Telephone: 814-332-6945
24-Hour Emergency: 1-800-373-3398

Counties: Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango and Warren

Northcentral Region

208 W. Third St., Suite 101
Williamsport, PA 17701
Main Telephone: 570-327-3636
24-Hour Emergency: 570-327-3636

Counties: Bradford, Cameron, Clearfield, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga and Union

Northeast Region

2 Public Square
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-1915
Main Telephone: 570-826-2511
24-Hour Emergency: 570-826-2511

Counties: Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming

Southwest Region

400 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4745
Main Telephone: 412-442-4000
24-Hour Emergency: 412-442-4000

Counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland

Southcentral Region

909 Elmerton Ave.
Harrisburg, PA 17110
Main Telephone: 717-705-4700
24-Hour Emergency: 1-877-333-1904

Counties: Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry and York

Southeast Region

2 E. Main St.
Norristown, PA 19401
Main Telephone: 484-250-5900
24-Hour Emergency: 484-250-5900

Counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia