

# Mobile Cleaning – Food Service Related

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Photo Credit: Geoff Brosseau

## Description

This category includes businesses that both conduct their own mobile cleaning or “power washing” activities and those that are hired as contractors to conduct these activities. Mobile cleaning differs from other cleaning activities in that the cleaning is not conducted in a dedicated, fixed location with a wastewater capture and treatment system connected to the sanitary sewer system. This category includes mobile cleaning or power washing of food service business-related objects or areas:

- Restaurant alleys and dumpster areas
- Restaurant floor mats and exhaust filters (baffles)
- Kitchen oil and grease
- Grocery carts
- Lunch wagons and food carts

Information specific to: transportation-related cleaning, surface cleaning, or cleaning of amenities is provided in other guide sheets.

## Pollutant Sources

The following are sources of pollutants:

- Using harmful cleaning chemicals – including soaps as well as solvents
- Removing food waste, trash, and oil and grease
- Generating polluted wash water from cleaning activities

Pollutants can include:

- Organic materials (food wastes)
- Oil and grease
- Toxic chemicals in cleaning products, disinfectants, and pesticides



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## Approach

The potential for generating stormwater pollution as part of these activities requires extra attention because by definition these activities are conducted outside with water (and sometimes chemicals) for the purpose of removing residues, dirt, and debris. Make stormwater pollution prevention BMPs a part of standard operating procedures and the employee training program. Provide employee education materials in the first language of employees, as necessary.

Use the following four-step approach:

1. Do dry cleanup before washing down
2. Wash without soaps and solvents
3. Keep polluted water out of storm drains
4. Dispose of wastewater correctly and legally

## Source Control BMPs

The best management practices are listed by activity or area.

### Restaurant Alleys and Dumpster Areas

- Do not discharge wash water to storm drain.
- Use dry cleaning methods only (use absorbents, sweep debris)

**or**

- After using dry cleaning methods, seal the storm drain. Wash area. Pump wash water to sanitary sewer. Use screens to collect wash water particles before entrance to sanitary sewer.

### Restaurant Floor Mats and Exhaust Filters (baffles)

- Do not discharge wash water to storm drain.
- Clean mats, etc. indoors and discharge to sanitary sewer or clean mats, etc. outside in bermed or sloped area which drains to sanitary sewer.

**or**

- Take mats and baffles to a public car wash that discharges wash water to the sanitary sewer.

### Kitchen Oil and Grease

- Do not pour into storm drain or sanitary sewer (sink, floor drain, etc.)
- Save in sealed containers such as tallow bin
- Separate recyclable fats from waste grease (from an interceptor or trap).
- See “Tallow,” “Grease Traps,” or “Septic” in yellow pages for recycling or disposal service or locations.

### Grocery Carts

- If soap is used, capture and filter the wastewater. Then pump it to the sanitary sewer.
- If soap is not used, capture and filter wash water. Then pump it to the storm drain or use a filter barrier (boom) to remove debris and send the wash water to the storm drain once the water is cool.

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## Lunch Wagons and Food Carts

- Do not discharge wash water to storm drain (except melted ice).
- Discharge to a commissary that can accept and discharge wastewater to the sanitary sewer.
- Clean on a properly equipped wash pad.

## Treatment Control BMPs

The use of self-contained, mobile wastewater collection/treatment units may be appropriate and cost-effective for some mobile cleaning activities.

## More Information

Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group, 1995. Outdoor Cleaning - Where does the Water go? Guidelines for disposal of wash water from outdoor cleaning projects: Sidewalk/plaza/parking lot cleaning, Vehicle cleaning/detailing, Building exterior cleaning, Waterproofing, Equipment cleaning/degreasing.

City of Santa Cruz, 2000. Food Service Facilities – Best Management Practices, Section 2 of Best Management Practices Manual for the Stormwater Program.

Fairfield-Suisun Urban Runoff Management Program, 1999. Stormwater Pollution Prevention Practices for Mobile Cleaning Activities, Guidance for Mobile Washers Who Clean Buildings Exteriors, Flat Work, Sidewalks, Drive-Thrus, Plazas, Parking Areas or Who Perform Fleet Washing, Auto Detailing, Carpet Cleaning, or Food-Related Cleaning Activities.

San Francisco Bay Area CETA (Cleaning Equipment Trade Association), 1995. Mobile Cleaner Best Management Practices for Wastewater Runoff.

## References

Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group, 1995. Outdoor Cleaning - Where does the Water go? Guidelines for disposal of wash water from outdoor cleaning projects: Sidewalk/plaza/parking lot cleaning, Vehicle cleaning/detailing, Building exterior cleaning, Waterproofing, Equipment cleaning/degreasing.

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King County Surface Water Management Division, 1995. Stormwater Pollution Control Manual. Best Management Practices for Businesses.  
(<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/dss/spcm.htm>)

San Francisco Bay Area CETA (Cleaning Equipment Trade Association), 1995. Mobile Cleaner Best Management Practices for Wastewater Runoff.