

Alachua County Water Quality Code

Chapter 77 (Ordinance 02-27) prohibits non-storm water discharges into storm water management systems, which includes most roads.

The Storm Drain System

was built to collect and transport rain to prevent flooding in urban areas. In most areas, anything that flows or is discharged into the storm drain system goes directly into local creeks without any treatment.



Pressure washing uses mechanical equipment to create a high pressure stream of water, typically ejected from a hand-held wand or nozzle. This jet of water is used for cleaning a wide variety of surfaces and objects.

Pressure washing can pollute our water.

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

High nutrient levels occur in waterways from inputs of pet waste, fertilizer, and soaps (even biodegradable ones). This can trigger algae blooms, creating deadly low-oxygen conditions for fish and other aquatic life.

Household hazardous wastes, like pesticides, paints, solvents, and auto fluids can poison aquatic life.

Disposal Requirements and Options continued

HAZARDOUS WASTE: Beware of pressure washing surfaces that contain lead-based paint, or areas with freestanding liquids (e.g. oil, solvents, antifreeze, etc.). Pressure washing these types of surfaces may generate hazardous waste.

Generating hazardous waste will increase your operating costs and limit your disposal options. For information on hazardous waste determination, request copies of the Material Safety Data Sheet for cleaners used. You may also call the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department (352) 264-6800 with questions or the Household Hazardous Waste Center (352)334-0440 for disposal procedures.

Learn more about our water resources at:

Alachua County Environmental Protection Department
www.AlachuaCountyWater.org

Gainesville Clean Water Partnership
www.GainesvilleCreeks.org



for Pressure Washing

In this guide:

- Requirements for the disposal of waste and wastewater generated by the use of pressure washing equipment.
- How to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to comply with the Alachua County Water Quality Code and prevent water pollution in Alachua County.

The regulations and BMPs in this guide apply to anyone who generates wastewater from pressure washing, including:

- Contractors that provide a pressure washing service to others
- Businesses that use pressure washing equipment as part of their operations or maintenance (such as cleaning heavy equipment)
- Homeowners

Best Management Practices

Pressure Washing as Part of the Solution

Pressure washing can help improve the quality of our water when done properly. By cleaning (pressure washing) surfaces (e.g. equipment, parking lots, etc.) and collecting and disposing of the wastes generated we are removing pollutants that may have ended up in our waterways.

The Problem:

Most pressure washing activities are conducted outside without proper controls, leading to the discharge of wastewater to the storm drain (which leads to water bodies), unless the equipment operator takes steps to collect and dispose of it legally.

PLANNING: Prior to beginning pressure washing activities, determine what collection method you will be using and how you intend to properly dispose of the wastewater generated from each cleaning activity. Identify the specific location where you will dispose of wastewater. Obtain all necessary authorizations for wastewater disposal (e.g. property owner and/or sanitary sewer operator).

SURFACE PRE-CLEANING: Use dry methods for surface pre-cleaning, such as absorbents (e.g. kitty litter) on small oil spots and sweeping up trash/debris/dirt before wet washing. Pre-cleaning is an activity that may reduce costs and simplify the wastewater disposal process.

SITE PREP: Block storm drains with an impervious barrier such as gravel bags or berms, or seal storm drains with plugs or rubber mats.

PRESSURE WASHING: Minimize the amount of water used during pressure washing activities (use a low volume nozzle). Avoid using cleaning products that contain hazardous substances. You may not need cleaners at all. Wastewater with high pollutant concentrations, including cleaning compounds, must be completely collected and may not be left to evaporate.

WASTEWATER COLLECTION: Locate high and low-spots to determine the area where wastewater can be pooled for collection. Identify where all the storm drains are situated and block or tightly seal any drains where wastewater will accumulate. Common equipment used includes: vacuum pumps, booms/berms, weighted storm drain covers, holding tanks, portable sump pumps, hoses, absorbents, and more. Place an oil-absorbent mat or pad on top of collected wastewater to help reduce the amount of oil re-deposited on the surface of the collection area. Visible solids remaining in the collection area must be swept up to prevent subsequent discharge to the storm drain.

Disposal Requirements and Options

It is the responsibility of the generator to determine the proper collection and disposal method for wastewater created by pressure washing. Obtain Material Safety Data Sheets for cleaners used to determine proper handling and disposal requirements. To avoid unanticipated costs, delays, and violations, this determination should always be made prior to starting any job. All disposal methods are subject to the requirements, restrictions, and prohibitions outlined at right.

STORM DRAINS: Discharging pressure washing wastewater, into any body of water or any storm water drainage system (storm drains, ditches, and gutters) within Alachua County is prohibited by Federal, State, and local laws. Exceptions to this prohibition must be approved in writing.

EVAPORATION: Pressure washing wastewater that contains visible debris or residue (soap, detergent or other cleaning agents) or excessive amounts of any other pollutants may not be left on paved surfaces to evaporate, because the residue will eventually be discharged to the storm drain.

LAND DISPOSAL: Wastewater disposal to land must not create a nuisance condition, flow into the storm drain, or contaminate soil with hazardous waste. Wastewater containing garbage, food wastes, or

visible trash may not be discharged to land. Any wastewater disposal to land must have the approval of the property owner.

SANITARY SEWER: Disposal of pressure washing wastewater to the sanitary sewer must meet the sanitary operator's requirements (e.g. GRU). Please call your wastewater utility for further information on disposal requirements.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS: Discharges of pressure washing wastewater to a septic system is not recommended. The Alachua County Health Department (352 334-7930) must approve the discharge before pressure washing occurs. Discharges that contain hazardous waste, have the potential to harm septic systems, or are likely to contaminate groundwater and/or potable wells, will not be approved.

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