



UNIVERSITY OF  
**NORTHERN COLORADO**

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**Environmental Health and Safety**

***Power Washing Guidelines***

April 2024



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## Power Washing Guidelines

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**Environmental Health and Safety**  
**Power Washing Guidelines**

**I. Purpose and Responsibilities**

This procedure will serve as a guide to individuals who will be performing or assisting with power washing on campus. Wastewater from power washing must be collected and disposed of properly and is not allowed to enter the storm sewer system. Proper power-washing wastewater collection will help to prevent and reduce stormwater pollution.

It is the responsibility of each department to ensure that their employees are properly trained on these power washing guidelines as needed, and that all affected personnel receive a copy of these procedures prior to beginning Power Washing operations.

This guidance has been developed to comply with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, WQP-27, Low-Risk Discharges section.

**II. Definitions**

Stormwater - Stormwater refers to runoff or excess water caused by precipitation such as rain or melting snow. Stormwater is not treated prior to entering local water sources. This water travels across land, picking up any materials it encounters and depositing those materials into local waters.

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) - In municipalities, stormwater runs through sewer grates into a piping system that most often drains into a local water source such as a lake or river.

Discharge - The introduction or addition of a pollutant into local waters, most often as a result of contaminated stormwater.

Illicit Discharge - Any discharge to an MS4 that is not composed entirely of stormwater except discharges specifically authorized regulatory authority or permitting.

### **III. Risk Identification**

Faculty, staff, students, or contractors who may conduct or assist with power washing on UNC's campus must follow these guidelines. Some University departments that may fall under these guidelines include, but are not limited to: Facilities Management, Dining Services, Housing and Residential Education, and the Recreation Center.

### **IV. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

When an individual or assistant is conducting power washing the following PPE shall be worn at all times:

- Leather gloves
- Safety glasses (goggles preferred)
- No slip shoes or over boots

The department supervisor is responsible for providing the appropriate PPE.

### **V. Illicit Discharge Prevention & Control Measures**

Preventing illicit discharges into the City of Greeley storm sewer system is vital, and employees are required to take steps to prevent and control such events while performing power washing activities. Before conducting any power washing activities:

- Employees shall identify the location(s) of any nearby storm sewer drains.
- Employees should ensure they are aware of the location of spill prevention and control materials such as drain covers and absorbent socks or pads.
- The UNC Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Plan is available in the EHS office in Parson Hall.
- The UNC Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan is available in the EHS office in Parsons Hall.

### **VI. Procedure of Operations**

The following is a list of guidelines to be followed by employees or contractors who conduct or assist with power washing on campus:

- A. All employees shall wear the appropriate PPE when power washing.
- B. Dry methods should be used for pre-cleaning surfaces.

- Sweep up trash, debris, dirt before power washing.
  - Ensure the area is clear of any materials that may wash away during power washing activity
- C. Minimize the amount of water used during power washing.
- D. At no time should any soap or chemical cleaners be used when power washing outdoors.
- E. Hoses must be placed out of walking pathways to prevent tripping hazards.
- F. The operator shall always maintain a firm grip on the wand assembly when operating the unit.
- G. The operator shall not place a hand or other body part in front of the pressure washing wand while in operation.
- H. The operator shall not direct the water stream toward people, electrical outlets, circuit breakers, or other electrical equipment.
- I. The operator shall never leave operating equipment unattended.
- J. All other personnel shall maintain a minimum distance of 20 feet from all pressure washing operations.
- K. When discharging power washing wastewater to land, the following conditions must be met:
- Discharges shall only be from the washing of surfaces exposed to precipitation such as building exteriors, outdoor parking lots, sidewalks, patio areas, and exteriors of vehicles (except for vehicles beds, chutes, or other surfaces used for containing or transferring materials)
  - The discharge shall not be from washing activities associated with spills that require reporting.
  - The water can be discharged onto the grass as long as it does not harm the vegetation, and the water does not run out of the grass area.
  - The addition of chemicals and detergents to the wash water or to the discharge is strictly prohibited.
  - Floating or solid materials shall not be evident in the discharge.
  - A visible sheen shall not be evident in the discharge.
  - The discharge shall not cause erosion of a land surface.
  - The discharge shall not occur during a stormwater runoff event

- L. All wastewater from power washing activities that do not meet the land discharge conditions should be properly collected or discharged into the sanitary sewer system with prior approval from the City of Greeley PTOW. Contact EHS in order to receive approval for discharges. If a CDPS Individual Permit is required, EHS will assist in the process of receiving a permit.
- M. If power-washing wastewater collection is needed, these conditions should be met:
- Operator will know the locations of storm drains in the power washing vicinity.
  - Drain covers and/or soaks should be placed on or around storm drains as needed to protect power-washing wastewater from entering the drain.
  - Determine where wastewater will be pooled for collection, taking into consideration high and low spots in the power washing area.
  - Once wastewater has been collected, visible solids remaining in the collection area after liquids have evaporated must be swept up and properly disposed to prevent future discharges to the storm sewer system.
  - The equipment that can be used to contain and collect wastewater include:
    - Vacuum pumps
    - Berms
    - Storm drain covers
    - Holding tanks
    - Hoses
    - Absorbent socks or pads
  - Once collected, the wastewater may be disposed of to a drain connected to the sanitary sewer system. For prior approval see section L.
- N. Employees shall notify their supervisor and EHS immediately if a release occurs.

## **VII. Training and Recordkeeping**

Employees who may perform or assist with power washing activities shall receive proper training on these guidelines. It is the responsibility of each department to ensure that their employees receive the required training and collect proper training records. Training records will be maintained in the Environmental Health and Safety office.