Focus on Carpet Cleaning

Preventing stormwater pollution is good business

Good Business Practices for Carpet Cleaning & Wastewater Disposal

Why is wastewater from carpet cleaning operations a concern?

Wastewater from carpet cleaning may contain dirt, soap, oil, grease, solvents, and other toxic chemicals. These common pollutants can enter our waterways and harm the animals and plants that live there.

How and where you dispose of carpet cleaning wastewater matters. Imagine swimming in a stew of carpet cleaning wastewater – it's not a pretty picture. But this is exactly what can happen if your carpet cleaning waste enters a storm drain. Water that goes into storm drains or ditches is not treated and goes directly to our lakes, rivers, and creeks. Carpet cleaning businesses must implement appropriate best management practices (BMPs) to prevent these pollutants from entering storm drains or ditches.

Best management practices help protect the environment

How? It's Easy. Be smart! Plan ahead. You can take simple steps to complete carpet cleaning work without polluting the environment.

- Make sure your equipment is well serviced and that all filters are operating properly. Maintain the tanks, hoses, and fittings to prevent wastewater leaks.
- Where possible, invest in cleaning equipment and cleaning practices that minimize water use.
- Train your operators and employees on appropriate carpet cleaning best management practices, as well as pollution prevention and wastewater discharge requirements.
- Check with your clients when booking the job. Is this location on sewer or septic system?

Did you know? Storm drains discharge directly to our lakes, creeks, and waterways UNTREATED. This is why it is dangerous and illegal to dispose of carpet cleaning wash water in the storm drain system. Wastewater contains toxic chemicals and can harm humans, sensitive habitats, and wildlife.

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Areas on a sewer system

Arrange with the client to allow you to discharge into the toilet or utility sink on the premises. If this is not possible, plan to transport the wastewater off-site and dispose of it properly at an authorized sewage discharge point.

Areas on Septic Systems

At a location with a septic system, plan to store wastewater and residues in a collection tank and transport them to an authorized sewage discharge point for proper disposal.

Identify the wastewater disposal option that will be used and ensure that you meet all the requirements to do so. Contact your local sewer authority for information about requirements.

Smart Carpet Cleaning Practices

- **Assess the site:** Before starting the job, do a quick check of the location of stormwater drains and ensure that they are protected from any runoff or spills.
- **Vacuum before cleaning:** This minimizes the amount of debris in the wastewater.
- **Follow instructions:** Always use the recommended type and quantity of chemicals (including water-based, biodegradable, and low-phosphate products, where available) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Remember, just because a product is biodegradable doesn't mean it can be discharged to a storm drain. Store and handle detergents and chemicals in a contained area where any spills will not enter the storm drain.
- **Filter all wastewater** before discharging into the sewer system, since fibers and other debris in the wastewater can clog pipes. The filtered materials may be disposed of in the garbage, unless the waste is contaminated. Waste contaminated with hazardous pollutants must comply with hazardous materials disposal requirements. If you have any questions about finding out if wastes are hazardous and how they should be disposed of, contact a hazardous waste specialist at your nearest Ecology office. See the contact list at: *http://www.ecy.wa.gov/reportenviroproblem.html#lookup.*
- Dispose of wastewater properly.

Did you know?
You should never dispose of carpet cleaning wastewater into a septic system. The chemicals may cause the system to fail and contaminate groundwater and drinking water.

Is your business part of the problem or part of the solution?

Knowing your role can help protect Washington waters, save you money in fines, and also prevent negative publicity about your business. All businesses have a role in keeping our lakes, rivers, marine and ground waters clean. Our health and economy depend on it. Your business can be a pollution solution!

Contact information:

Justine Asohmbom,
Puget Sound
Education Coordinator
425-649-7108
juas461@ecy.wa.gov

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Remember:
Only rain down the drain.