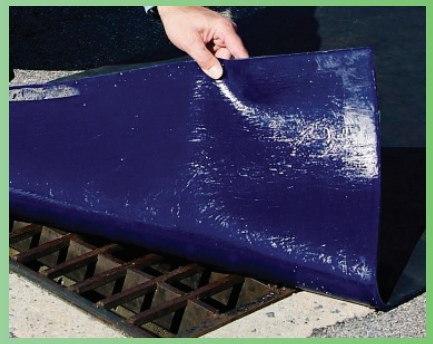
Storm Drain Covers/Mats

These devices cover storm drain grates, creating a quick seal, thus preventing washwater from entering the storm drain system. Storm drain covers/mats (magnetic vinyl mats, PVC drain covers, polyurethane mats, and others) allow washwater to accumulate on top of it until the pressure washing activity is complete and the washwater can be collected for proper disposal.



Berms

Berms provide a barrier around the storm drain inlet, allowing washwater to pool.

Vacuums/Pumps

Devices such as wet/dry vacuums, sump pumps, and vacuum pumps collect washwater. These devices typically have an extension (vacuum boom) which allows the washwater to be collected efficiently.

Vacuum Boom

Vacuum booms are an attachment for the vacuum device. The boom typically rests flush on the ground and draws washwater through small holes on the bottom of the boom.

Best Management Practices for Power Washing

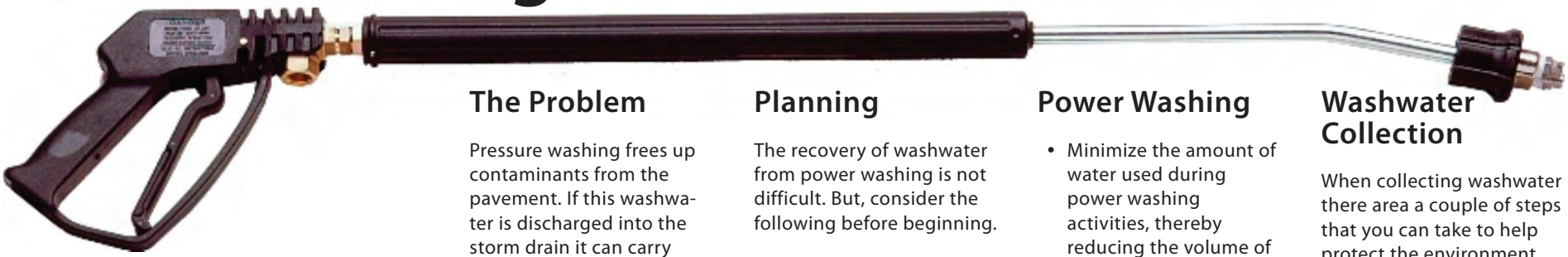
Service Providers

Power washing is one way we can improve water quality. Power washing parking lots, sidewalks, and driveways and collecting and depositing of the washwater keeps pollutants from ending up in our waterways.

Harris County

Clean Water Clear Choice

Power Washing as Part of the Solution



Sediments and other solids remaining on the ground should be swept or vacuumed up immediately so they don't wash into the storm drain system during a rain event.

The Problem

Pressure washing frees up contaminants from the pavement. If this washwater is discharged into the storm drain it can carry these pollutants into our lakes, creeks, streams, bayous, and ultimately Galveston Bay.

Regulations

State and local regulations prohibit the discharge of pollutants to the storm drain or waterways. Civil penalties include:

- Harris County's Storm Water Quality Regulations - up to $1,000 per day per violation.
- Texas Water Code, Section 7.102 - up to $25,000 per day per violation.

Planning

The recovery of washwater from power washing is not difficult. But, consider the following before beginning.

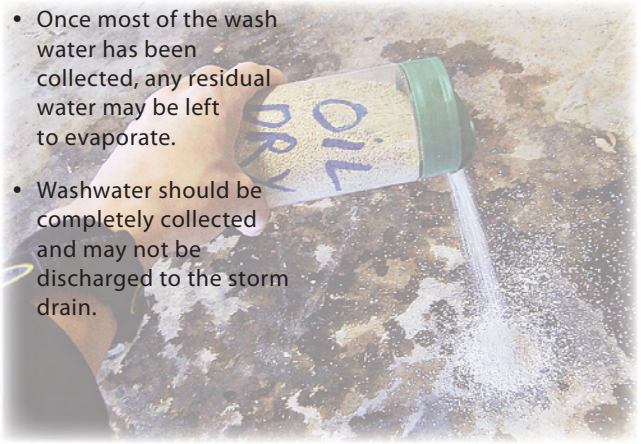
- Locate all affected storm drains.
- Locate high and low spots and determine where washwater will tend to pool.
- Obtain authorization from the wastewater utility that will receive your washwater.

Surface Pre-Cleaning

Before washing, pre-clean the area using dry methods, such as sweeping up trash and drying small oil spots with absorbents.

Power Washing

- Minimize the amount of water used during power washing activities, thereby reducing the volume of washwater that must be disposed.
- Avoid cleaning products containing harsh substances (e.g., acid, sodium hydroxide, bleach, etc.) that can turn washwater into hazardous waste.
- Once most of the wash water has been collected, any residual water may be left to evaporate.
- Washwater should be completely collected and may not be discharged to the storm drain.



Washwater Collection

When collecting washwater there area a couple of steps that you can take to help protect the environment.

- Place an oil-absorbent mat/pad on top of collected washwater.
- Sweep up any remaining solids once all the washwater has been collected.

Factoid

The purpose of storm drains is to carry rainwater away from developed areas and prevent flooding.

Storm Drain Protection

Water entering the storm drain is not treated or cleaned to remove pollutants. Pollutants discharged to the storm drain can harm fish and wildlife and contaminate recreational sites and drinking water supplies.