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# FACT SHEET
# Condominium Car Wash Discharges

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has interpreted the phrase "individual residential car washing" as applying to residents of both single family and multi-family residences. Car wash discharges from both are allowed to the City streets and drainage system. However, the City is still tasked by EPA to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable, and will do this primarily by educating the public about best management practices to achieve this requirement.

## HOW AND WHERE CAN I WASH CARS, OR WHAT ARE BMPs?

You should use the following best management practices (BMPs):

- Direct wash water to a planted area and allow the wash water to percolate into the ground. Save water by using a bucket and nozzle for your hose to keep from letting the water run continuously.
- If runoff cannot be directed to a planted area, wash on open areas, but contain all water on your property, if possible. If the water cannot be contained on the property, it may be directed into the sanitary sewer through a cleanout.
- Use detergents sparingly, and only those which contain low or no phosphates (phosphate is a nutrient which can contribute to algae blooms). Use only the amount necessary to loosen soil. A rule of thumb is to use no more cleaner than can be rinsed using a five gallon bucket of rinse water.
- Dispose of leftover soapy water (in your bucket) into a toilet or sink, not on the driveway or street. Do not wash vehicle engines or the undercarriages. Contaminated wash water is not allowed to enter the storm water system.
- You may wash your car on City streets if use of water is kept to a minimum, and washing does not create a nuisance, traffic hazard, or environmental problem.

Your condo association should consider the following:

- Designate a car wash area and post signs for area. At the designated area, put BMPs in place as listed above, such as curbs or berms to direct wash water to a planted area. A sign template for a designated car wash area is available on the City's website at ~~www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com~~ in the Resource Library under 'Car Care.'
- Reconfigure or install new plumbing at the designated car wash area. Collect wash water in an inlet, send it through an oil-water separator to remove oil, and then pipe it to the sanitary sewer system. If the wash area is under a roof, storm water runoff may not be a problem. If the car wash area is in an open area, one solution is to install a special diverter valve to separate wash water from rainwater. During car washing, the diverter valve would be open and the wash water directed to the sanitary sewer. Normal conditions, the diverter valve would be closed, to direct surface runoff and rainwater to the storm drain system. If this option is used, then no other BMPs are required for wash water disposal.

## ARE THERE OTHER DISCHARGES THAT ARE PROHIBITED AT MY CONDOMINIUM?

- There are other nonstorm water discharges that are prohibited, including wash water from trashcans or dumpsters, excessive soil sediment discharge from off road vehicles, washing of vehicle undercarriages and engine degreasing.

## HOW CAN I GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

- For more information, please call the Storm Water Quality Branch of DFM at 768-3268.