

Best Management Practices for Vehicle Wash Operations



The operator of a petroleum marketing facility has the responsibility to ensure compliance with all Federal, Provincial and Municipal Acts, Regulations and By-laws applicable to effluent discharges into sewer systems. To assist operators to minimize the risk of hazardous substances entering into sewer systems, Best Management Practices should be implemented. **The Best Management Practice (BMP) is a document that, when adopted by a municipality into its by-law, provides an alternate and efficient sewer discharge management tool. Should there be any discrepancy between the BMP and applicable Federal and Provincial Acts and Regulations and/or Municipal By-laws, the Acts, Regulations and/or By-laws take precedence.**

This information should be posted in a work area such that it is both conspicuous and readily accessible to all employees.



Inspection and Maintenance of Sediment Pits and Oil/Water Separators

Most vehicle wash facilities have one or more sedimentation pits and a few may also have an oil/water separator. Inspection and maintenance of these sediment pits and oil/water separators should adhere to the following:

1. Sampling ports should be readily and easily accessible at all times.
2. The sediment pits and oil/water separators should be inspected 4 times per year and the depth of bottom sludge and floating oils should be measured.
3. The solids in the sedimentation pit(s) should not exceed 75 percent of the wetted height of the sedimentation pit. (As solids build up in the bottom of the pit the efficiency of the pit decreases and the chance of sludge passing through increases).
4. Settled solids in the oil/water separator should not be left to accumulate in excess of the lesser of 15 cm or 25 percent of the wetted height of the oil/water separator.
5. Floating oil and grease in the oil/water separator should not be left to accumulate in excess of the lesser of 5 cm or 5 percent¹ of the wetted height of the oil/water separator because the efficiency of the interceptor decreases with increasing levels of floating material. Due to the volatile nature of some oils, solvents and fuels, these materials should not be left to accumulate as they can cause health and safety concerns.
6. A sediment pit and oil/water separator should be cleaned out within seven days if during inspection the measured amounts exceed the criteria noted in the three points above.
7. When a sedimentation pit or an oil/water separator is cleaned, the oil and grease and bottom solids should not be disposed of into any sewer connected to a sewage treatment facility or at any location where it may be introduced to a storm sewer or a watercourse. Clean out should be done by a provincially licensed and approved waste collector.
8. Hot water, detergents, solvents or any other chemical agents should not be used to flush oil out of the oil/water separator.
9. At wand washes proper signage should be posted that informs people that engine washing and the disposal of oil, brake fluid, transmission fluid, antifreeze or other prohibited substances into a sewer connected to a sewage treatment facility is not allowed.

¹ As the design and capacity of oil/water separators may vary, the manufacturer's maximum recommended levels may be used as alternative maximum floating oil and grease levels.



Spill Clean-up

1. All fuel spills should be immediately cleaned-up with rags or sorbents and disposed of according to applicable provincial regulations.
2. Rags used for spill clean up should be stored in closed containers awaiting collection and/or cleaning.
3. Sorbents used for spill clean up should be stored in closed containers awaiting disposal by a government licensed contractor.



Vehicle Wash Chemicals and Soaps

1. Store vehicle wash chemicals such as detergents, waxes and other cleaning agents and machinery lubrication products in properly MSDS identified containers. An up-to-date MSDS should be available for each product and employees should be knowledgeable of their content and where to access them at any time.

