

wash water collection equipment. This list is available online by visiting Gwinnett County's Surface Cleaning Web page. See the back side of this brochure for directions on accessing this contractor list. You can also call 678.376.6700 for copies of any of the documents mentioned in this brochure.

### Enforcement

If you witness the uncontrolled discharge of polluted wash water into a storm drain, please report the individual or company by calling 678.376.7000 (24-hours/day). Please include as much information as possible in your report, including a description of the individual(s), vehicle, discharge location, and photographs if available. Vehicle markings, including tag numbers, are also very helpful.

By preventing the pollution of our waterways, we can positively affect the quality of the water that we all use for fishing, recreation, and drinking.



### For more information

You may review documents referred to within this brochure on Gwinnett County's Surface Cleaning Web page by visiting [www.gwinnettstormwater.com](http://www.gwinnettstormwater.com). Click on *Water Quality Protection* found in the left-hand column. Then click on *Industrial Inspections* and then again on *Surface Cleaning*.

Should you have any questions or comments on this topic, please call during office hours and ask for Gwinnett County's Stormwater Management Division at **678.376.6700**.

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## under pressure: A Consumer's Guide to Hiring a Pressure Washing Contractor



**Clean Water  
Begins With You**

## The Problem: Water Pollution

According to the EPA, 80 percent of water pollution in the United States is not caused by pollution from large industries, but rather by the combined effect of numerous smaller pollutant sources that are placed, spilled, or dumped onto the ground or into storm drains. These pollutants are then carried by these storm drains into local creeks and streams when it rains.



*Illicit discharge to storm drain*

## The Pressure Washing Industry

The inappropriate disposal of wash water generated during pressure washing contributes to this water pollution. In addition to cleaning chemicals, wash water often also contains pollutants such as oil and grease that are removed during the cleaning process. To prevent water pollution this wash water must be controlled and collected for proper disposal.

Unfortunately, many pressure washing contractors still allow this waste to drain illegally into the storm drains that connect directly into the creeks and streams in our communities.

## The Law

Gwinnett County's *Illicit Discharge and Illegal Connection (IDIC) Ordinance* prohibits the discharge of anything other than stormwater into a storm drain or waterway. Maximum penalties for violation include a \$1,000.00 fine and/or 60 days in County jail.

## Water Quality Guideline: Surface Cleaning

In an effort to address this source of pollution and provide guidance to the pressure washing industry, Gwinnett County has worked with the industry group **Power Washers of North America** to develop an operating guideline for surface cleaning. This guideline describes environmentally-responsible cleaning procedures and details practices that should be used in managing polluted wash water.

If the area to be cleaned is polluted in any way and/or the contractor plans to use a chemical (including "environmentally-friendly" or "biodegradable" detergents) to assist with cleaning, the guideline requires that the resulting wash water be managed. Management will likely involve



*Proprietary wash water containment and collection equipment*

wash water surface flow controls and/or collection equipment. Depending on the type of wash water, disposal options will include on site disposal or removal for disposal offsite at an approved facility.

Less stringent guidelines apply to circumstances where an unpolluted surface is to be cleaned with water only.

Pressure washing contractors operating within Gwinnett County are expected to comply with the ordinance and follow the adopted industry guideline. Copies of these documents are available online by visiting Gwinnett County's Surface Cleaning Web page. Please see the back of this brochure for directions on accessing these documents.

## What Can I Do?

The management of polluted wash water often requires the use of specialized equipment. Not all contractors have this equipment and may not be able to comply with the law.

As a consumer who employs pressure washing contractors, you can have a significant impact on the prevention of water pollution by simply choosing a contractor who follows the guidelines. Keep in mind that as the consumer, you may also be held responsible for illegal discharges that occur on your property.

The County has developed a list of contractors who have obtained, and demonstrated their ability to use, appropriate