

EA-PPG13

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



029663



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ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE - WORKING TOGETHER

HIGH PRESSURE WATER & STEAM CLEANERS: PPG13

POLLUTION PREVENTION GUIDELINES

These notes are for guidance only. They are jointly produced by the Environment agency for England and Wales, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Environment and Heritage Service in Northern Ireland, referred to as the Agency or Agencies in these guidelines. Each site will be considered according to the individual circumstances and early consultation with your local Agency Office is advisable. Contact details will be found at the end of these guidelines.

1. GENERAL

The Agencies are responsible for the protection of "controlled waters" from pollution and it is an offence to cause such pollution, either deliberately or accidentally. "Controlled waters" include all watercourses, lakes, locks, coastal waters and water contained in underground strata (groundwater). The formal consent of the Agency is required for many discharge to controlled waters. This includes both direct discharges and discharges to soakaways. Consents are subject to conditions and are not granted automatically.

2. INTRODUCTION

Pressure washers provide a fast and effective mechanism for the removal of dirt, grease and coatings, such as paint, from vehicles, machinery and impermeable surfaces. Wash waters containing the dislodged dirt or grime usually pass directly to the nearest drain.

The pressure washer may either be permanently stationed at a cleaning bay or transported to the point of use. The only requirements are an adequate water supply, a power source and a suitable means of waste disposal.

3. THE PROBLEM

Pressure washers may produce large volumes of waste water, ranging from 50 - 900 litres of water per hour, at temperatures as high as 120°C. Traffic film removers or other cleaning chemicals may be added to increase the effectiveness of the operation and, on occasions, abrasive agents such as sand or grit may be incorporated with the wash waters.

In many cases, power washers are used in open hardstanding areas where the drainage system has been installed to deal solely with uncontaminated surface water or rainwater. The resulting effluent usually discharges from the site via these drains.

4. HOW WATER POLLUTION OCCURS

Open yards, garage forecourts and car parking areas normally drain to surface water drains which ultimately discharge to local streams or underground soakaways. Should this drainage system become polluted, either by spillage or contaminated wash waters, pollution of the receiving stream or underground waters will occur.

5. HOW TO AVOID WATER POLLUTION

In order to avoid the risk of pollution, the operator must first ensure that the drainage area which will receive contaminated wash waters does not pass to the surface water system. If in doubt, contact the local council, sewerage undertaker or alternatively the Agency for advice.

If cleaning is normally carried out in one place, it is advisable to designate the area as a washdown bay, surround the site with a raised kerb and direct the effluent to the foul sewer. Discharges to the foul water sewer may require the formal approval of the sewerage undertaker and prior authorisation should be obtained. New connections to the sewerage system may be subject to Building Regulation approval. Alternatively it may be possible to install a water recycling system where large volumes of water are used or no foul sewer is available.

In the event that disposal to the foul sewer or recycling are not possible, the effluent must be contained within a sealed drainage system or catchpit for off-site disposal by a licenced waste contractor.

The cleaning of drainage systems using pressure washers may present special difficulties, requiring the temporary sealing of the system and collection of effluent. It should be remembered that the responsibility for avoiding water pollution rests with both the operator and the site occupier.

6. WATER POLLUTION AND WHAT IT COSTS

Pollution can render surface water and groundwater unsuitable for legitimate uses. When pollution is traced, the Agency will take legal action if appropriate. Courts have the power to impose fines of up to £20,000 on conviction. In addition any costs incurred in remedying or mitigating the effects of pollution may be recovered by the Agency from the polluter.

7. REMEMBER

Effluent produced by pressure washing is a trade effluent and special precautions must be taken. The Agency will be pleased to offer advice on your particular application. If in doubt contact your nearest office listed below.

All the Agencies' pollution prevention guidance notes are available on the web sites listed below.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

HEAD OFFICE

Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West
Almondsbury, Bristol BS32 4UD.
Tel: 01454 624 400 Fax: 01454 624 409
World Wide Web: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

REGIONAL OFFICES

ANGLIAN

Kingfisher House
Goldhay Way
Orton Goldhay
Peterborough PE2 5ZR
Tel: 01733 371 811
Fax: 01733 231 840

MIDLANDS

Sapphire East
550 Streetsbrook Road
Solihull B91 1QT
Tel: 0121 711 2324
Fax: 0121 711 5824

NORTH EAST

Rivers House
21 Park Square South
Leeds LS1 2QG
Tel: 0113 244 0191
Fax: 0113 246 1889

NORTH WEST

Richard Fairclough House
Knuttsford Road
Warrington WA4 1HG
Tel: 01925 653 999
Fax: 01925 415 961

SOUTHERN

Guildbourne House
Chatsworth Road
Worthing
West Sussex BN11 1LD
Tel: 01903 832 000
Fax: 01903 821 832

SOUTH WEST

Manley House
Kestrel Way
Exeter EX2 7LQ
Tel: 01392 444 000
Fax: 01392 444 238

THAMES

Kings Meadow House
Kings Meadow Road
Reading RG1 8DQ
Tel: 0118 953 5000
Fax: 0118 950 0388

WELSH

Rivers House
St Mellons Business Park
St Mellons
Cardiff CF3 0LT
Tel: 01222 770 088
Fax: 01222 798 555

SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY

HEAD OFFICE

Erskine Court
The Castle Business Park
Stirling FK9 4TR
Tel: 01786 457 700
Fax: 01786 446 885
World Wide Web: <http://www.sepa.org.uk>

REGIONAL OFFICES

NORTH REGION HQ

Graesser House
Fodderty Way
Dingwall Business Park
Dingwall IV15 9XB
Tel: 01349 862 021
Fax: 01349 863 987

WEST REGION HQ

SEPA West
5 Redwood Crescent
Peel Park
East Kilbride G74 5PP
Tel: 01355 574 200
Fax: 01355 574 688

EAST REGION HQ

Clearwater House
Heriot-Watt Research Park
Avenue North
Riccarton
Edinburgh EH14 4AP
Tel: 0131 449 7296
Fax: 0131 449 7277

ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE SERVICE

Calvert House,
23 Castle Place,
Belfast 1
BT1 1FY
Tel: 01232 254868
Fax: 01232 254777

The 24-hour emergency hotline number for reporting all environmental incidents relating to air, land and water in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

EMERGENCY HOTLINE

0800 80 70 60



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