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Car Wash / Auto Detailing Facilities Fact Sheet

Due to increasing number of auto-detailing and smaller car wash businesses emerging in Hillsborough County, The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) has received numerous inquiries on the waste water management practices and permitting requirements for these facilities. This informational fact sheet is prepared to help the public and the business owners understand the regulatory requirements for car wash and other similar facilities. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has determined that certain vehicle washing activities result in insignificant environmental impacts and are, therefore, not required to apply for an industrial waste permit. These activities call for certain best management requirements, a general car wash permit or an industrial wastewater permit is required, pursuant to Chapter 62-660, F.A.C.. Please feel free to contact EPC at (813)272-5960, or the DEP at (813)744-6100, for further guidance and other questions relating to industrial wastewater permits.

Best Management requirements:

- Maximum amount of wastewater to be generated: 4000 gal/ week (estimation factors: 10-15 gal/ car with pressure washer; 25 gal/ car with nozzle on hose)
- No engine/ motor cleaning; only exterior washing of passenger vehicles is allowed.
- Use of solvent / degreasing agents are prohibited; biodegradable detergents and dry waxing shall be applied.
- No discharge of wastewater to surface waters. (example: storm drains, pond, etc.)
- No direct discharge of wastewater to ground water. (example: through wells sink holes)
- Adequate setbacks maintained. (100 ft from public wells, 75 ft from private wells)

Other Recommendations for Facilities:

- High pressure nozzle should be used to minimize quantity of wastewater generated.
- Overhang or other building structures provided to preclude rain water intrusion.
- Curbing around wash area to contain car wash wastewater for evaporation
- Maximum distance maintained from wash area to potential surface/ ground water access. (example: storm drain, ponds, drinking wells, etc.)
- Best management practices in water conservation and wastewater collection/ disposal.
- No run-off/ ponding which may create a nuisance condition for neighbors.

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