

# MOBILE CLEANING SERVICES

## WHY BE CONCERNED?

Home-based businesses often use a variety of processes and chemicals that may generate wastes that differ from domestic wastes generated by a residential home. Home-based businesses that offer mobile cleaning services generate carpet-cleaning, engine-degreasing and fleet-cleaning wastes similar to wastes generated by commercial businesses. These chemicals and associated wastes should be labeled, used, stored, and disposed of in a responsible manner to prevent environmental contamination and to comply with the law. While it may seem that your contribution to pollution is minor, effects of chemicals, runoff, and wasted water from hundreds or thousands of homes in your region can really add up. The following pages contain a self-assessment checklist that may be completed to help you identify potential sources of pollution.

## IDENTIFY ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Processes and potential wastes associated with this business/hobby that could harm the environment are listed below. Check  the activities that apply to your business.

- Carpet cleaning.
- Engine degreasing.
- Fleet washing.
- Surface cleaning.
- Chemical storage – outdated inventory or leaking chemical storage.
- Use of caustic or hazardous chemicals.
- Waste wash water recycling and disposal.
- Hazardous waste disposal.
- Unused or abandoned well on site.

## IDENTIFY METHODS OF WASTE DISPOSAL

Check  the waste disposal methods that you use.

- Municipal sanitary sewer
- Septic system or lagoon
- Ground, storm sewer, or surface water
- Licensed hazardous waste disposal option
- Licensed sanitary landfill/transfer station
- Compost
- Recycle
- On-site landfill (prohibited in most cases)
- Incineration/on-site burning (see Solid Waste section)

**If your home-based business discharges its non-domestic waste to a septic system, then your business is required to complete and submit an inventory form to KDHE. For inventory forms, call KDHE at 785-296-5560. Some wastes associated with a home business are considered “industrial waste” and may not be disposed of in a septic tank or domestic lagoon. Non-domestic waste from your home-based occupation should not be disposed of in a sanitary sewer without written permission from the municipality. Never put wastes in a storm drain or dump on the ground! See Wastewater section in the front of this publication.**

## BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Carpet-cleaning wastewaters contain soaps and other chemicals and should only be disposed of via a municipal sanitary sewer with permission. Disposal of these wastewaters to the storm drain, septic system, or lagoon is an unsafe practice, as this type of waste cannot be fully treated by these systems. In fact, these wastes are known to cause an increase in the biochemical oxygen demand of these systems, resulting in system failure or death of aquatic life.
- Engine-degreasing activities that utilize solvents must be done in a controlled environment. These waste solvents should be contained and handled as hazardous wastes.
- Fleet washing includes exterior washing to remove dirt and may or may not include use of soap. Again, this wastewater should be disposed of through a sanitary sewer with permission. If your equipment allows, the wash water may be left for evaporation.

**Disposal of any wastes other than domestic wastes to an on-site septic system or lagoon is prohibited. Never dump wastes onto the ground or into a storm drain. This practice can result in the contamination of streams, lakes, or groundwater.**

- Surface cleaning done as a result of an oil or hazardous material spill needs to be contained and evaluated for disposal as a hazardous waste. If a hazardous material release has occurred, the

local fire department should be contacted. Cleaning of sidewalks, plazas, or paved parking lots, with or without soaps, should be done in a manner to prevent release of the wash water to the storm drain. Best management practices dictate that area storm drains should be sealed, the area swept, solid waste debris disposed of, oil spots cleaned with an absorbent material if necessary, and all wash water disposed of into a proper sanitary sewer system. If oil and grit are present, the wash water should pass through an oil/water separator prior to disposal. The oil and solids need to be disposed of properly.

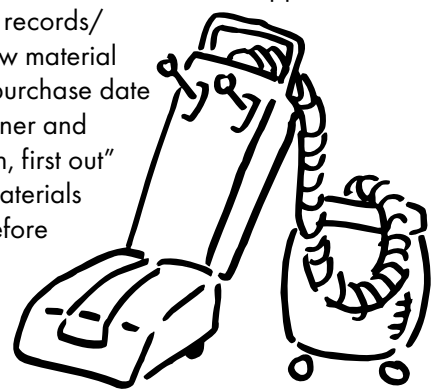
- Storage of chemicals and wastes should be done in a manner to prevent spills and environmental contamination. Inventory control prevents you from having to pay for a product twice—once as a material and then as a hazardous waste. Keep MSDSs on hand for all materials, maintain original labels whenever possible, and label hazardous wastes accordingly. Inspect the area periodically for problems associated with leaks or storage incompatibilities.
- Use of caustic or hazardous chemicals should be kept to a minimum, in an effort to prevent injuries and avoid the need for disposal of hazardous waste.
- Waste wash water recycling systems conserve water and prevent runoff. Water is sometimes filtered or evaporated. Dirt and sludge from these units can usually be disposed of as a solid waste. However, if it has been in contact with hazardous materials, it will need to be tested accordingly to determine the proper disposal method.
- As a waste generator, you must determine if the waste is hazardous and what the proper method for handling and disposal is (see Hazardous Waste section).
- Unused or abandoned wells should be plugged in accordance with KDHE regulations. Abandoned wells, if not properly sealed, can provide a direct route for contamination to enter the groundwater. In addition, open wells are a safety threat to small children and animals. A record of the plugging should be filed with KDHE. For more information, consult the general Water section of this document, or call KDHE at 785-296-3565.

**Some cities in Kansas require Mobile Wash businesses be permitted or licensed.**

## **POLLUTION PREVENTION AND WASTE MINIMIZATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- Use “dry cleanup” methods. Scrape and scoop before wash-down cleaning, and dispose of the waste as either solid waste or hazardous waste.
- Obtain written permission from the local sewage treatment plant to dispose of non-hazardous wash waters to its system.
- Seal storm drains if there is any chance that waste could drain into these areas.
- Design a system to capture all wash water for disposal via a municipal sanitary system.
- Report spills or releases to the local fire department; do not try to clean them up with your service. This could create a large hazardous waste expense for you.
- Avoid the use of hazardous cleaners such as solvents or caustics; substitute less toxic or non-toxic substances as cleaning agents. (See Health Education fact sheet at the back of this module.)
- Keep storage and work areas clean and well organized, and keep all containers properly labeled.
- Inventory your chemical storage and ensure storage in a manner to prevent spills and leaks. Obtain material safety data sheets.
- Keep all containers covered to prevent evaporation, contamination, spillage, or drying out of contents.
- Inspect materials upon delivery, and immediately return unacceptable materials to the supplier.
- Keep accurate records/inventory of raw material usage. Mark purchase date on each container and practice “first in, first out” so that older materials are used up before new ones are opened.

**The Small Business Environmental Assistance Program, SBEAP, is a confidential non-regulatory program funded by the state in an effort to assist small businesses with environmental concerns. Contact the SBEAP at 800-578-8898 or [www.sbeap.org](http://www.sbeap.org) if you have questions.**



- Keep waste streams separate for reuse, recycling, or treatment. Keep non-hazardous materials from becoming contaminated with hazardous ones.
- Properly dispose of these wastes and maintain disposal records for three or more years as required by law.
- Educate any employees to prevent pollution and apply the best management practice wherever possible.
- Abandoned wells should be plugged and reported in accordance with KDHE regulations (see Water section).

- For questions, call 800-578-8898. All services are free and confidential.
- A summary of environmental laws is found in the introduction/preface. The following laws may be applicable to this business:
  - wastewater regulations, state and sometimes local regulations
  - hazardous and solid waste regulations
  - storm water regulations, state and local
- Regulatory compliance information can be viewed or downloaded from the KDHE Web site at **[www.kdhe.state.ks.us](http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us)**.
- See Resources section at the back of this document.

**WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION**

- The Kansas SBEAP has several publications that address these issues of regulatory compliance and pollution prevention. See the list of SBEAP publications at the end of this manual, or go to **[www.sbeap.org](http://www.sbeap.org)** to view or download.

**SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

- Some materials adapted with permission from the City of Wichita, *Mobile Wash Policy*.

**ACTION STEPS**

What can you do to reduce wastes or environmental risks?	Set target dates for action.

**Notes:**