

This information is brought to you by the Interagency Regulatory Analysis Committee (IRAC). IRAC is an interagency consortium of city, county and state government agencies working together to resolve regulatory conflicts and promote environmental compliance. IRAC is also a forum for networking and exchange of information.

CARPET CLEANING FACT SHEET

10 Reasons for not discharging carpet cleaning wastewater to the street, gutters, parking lots, storm drains, ditches or surface water:

1. Phosphorus/Phosphates: Adds nutrients to water bodies accelerating and promoting algae growth which depletes oxygen levels
2. Chlorine: Lethal to aquatic life at levels below what we can measure
3. Ammonia: Changes water chemistry, toxic to aquatic life and makes a possibly lethal mixture when combined with chlorine
4. Phosphoric Acid: Toxic to aquatic organisms
5. Potassium Hydroxide: Toxic to aquatic organisms in low concentrations
6. Nitritotriacetic Acid: Harmful to aquatic life
7. TCE (Trichloroethene) : Degrades slowly in groundwater, probable human carcinogen, is broken down by soil microbes to vinyl chloride, a human carcinogen
8. PCE (Tetrachloroethylene) Persistent in groundwater, a human carcinogen
9. Washwater can have either very high or very low pH
10. Creates turbid water due to suspended solids, carpet fibers, and oils which affects growth of aquatic plants by reducing sunlight

FACT: Detergents, spot cleaners, chemicals that are used in the carpet cleaning process may include one or all of the above.

Carpet Cleaning Best Management Practices

1. Never discharge carpet cleaning wastewater to the street, gutters, parking lots, storm drainage system, lawns, ditches, groundwater or surface water.
2. Discharge carpet cleaning wastewater to a sink, toilet or other drain connected to the sanitary sewer system. Arrange with the client to discharge into the toilet or utility sink on the premises. **Screen washwater to protect the customer's drain from plugging up.**
3. Empty spent cleaning fluid tanks into a utility sink or other indoor sewer connection at the businesses home base.
4. Contact King County Industrial Waste (206-689-3000) or your local sewer utility to verify the need for a discharge authorization.
5. Do not discharge to an onsite septic system as chemicals may disrupt function of system and potentially contaminate groundwater and drinking water.
6. Do not discharge waste water to the ground.

REMEMBER almost everywhere in King County, water in gutters, ditches and storm drains flows directly to local creeks, streams, lakes and Puget Sound with no wastewater treatment. Cleaning fluids and soapy water can damage sensitive habitats and kill wildlife.

The above information applies even to cleaning products labeled “**nontoxic**” and “**biodegradable.**” “Nontoxic” means the product is not toxic to the *user*. “Biodegradable” means the product will *eventually* break down but may still be damaging to the environment

Disclaimer: This *information* is based on Washington state and local regulations. Businesses are encouraged to contact their local government agencies for specific local codes that may be more stringent.

IRAC

INTERAGENCY REGULATORY ANALYSIS COMMITTEE