



Guide to Managing Wastewater

Carpet Cleaning Industry



Guide to Managing Wastewater Carpet Cleaning Industry

©2018 Metro Vancouver

This guide was developed with the cooperation of and input from the carpet cleaning industry.

For more information please contact:

Metro Vancouver
4730 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC
V5H 0C6
604-432-6200

icentre@metrovancouver.org



Developed for Metro Vancouver by Ideaspace and KWL



Introduction

The carpet cleaning industry provides an important service to Metro Vancouver residents and businesses. Carpet cleaning protects indoor air quality, prevents the build up of allergens and bacteria, and prolongs the life of a floor-covering investment.

Some of the materials found in carpet cleaning wastewater can damage the wastewater system and pose a risk to fish and the natural environment.

Metro Vancouver has created this guide to help carpet cleaning operators manage wastewater safely and responsibly. To make sure the guide is practical and easy-to-use, Metro Vancouver consulted with representatives from the carpet cleaning industry.

We hope this guide reflects your business needs and provides you with convenient steps you can follow to manage wastewater in a way that safeguards the wastewater system and the natural environment.

Metro Vancouver is the regional government that represents 21 municipalities, one treaty first nation, and one electoral area in the Greater Vancouver area.

Metro Vancouver collects and treats wastewater to protect public health and the environment.

This guide will be of interest to the commercial carpet cleaning industry, including, but not limited to, businesses that clean carpets, including mobile and in-house operations. The practices described in this guide are appropriate for any carpet cleaning operation.



Managing Wastewater Safely and Responsibly

Our research has shown most carpet cleaning companies care about the environment and want to manage their wastewater safely and responsibly.

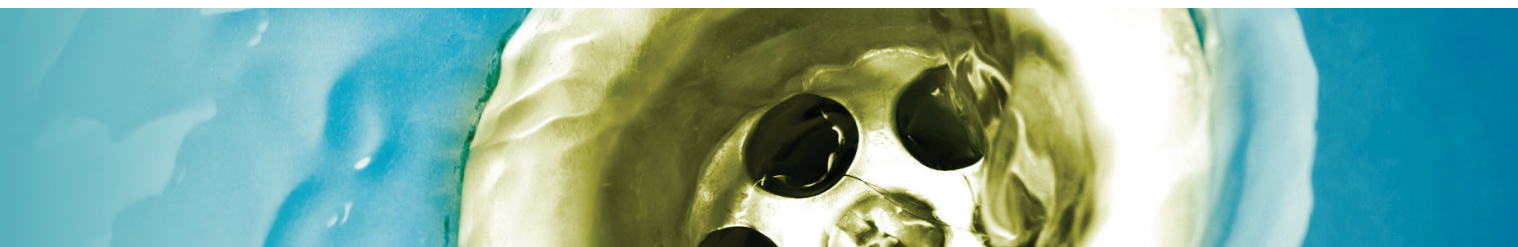
The carpet cleaning industry recognizes that building and maintaining a good reputation with customers includes the responsible management of the waste products from their work.

The industry has also told us that it is more efficient and cost-effective for the industry to voluntarily adopt recommended practices and avoid permits and regulations.

Most carpet cleaning operators remove dirt and stains from carpets by spraying them with a cleaning solution and then extracting the dirty, soapy water with a high-powered vacuum.

Many operators are unaware that wastewater from carpet cleaning may contain sediments and pollutants that can damage pipes, clog pumps and block screens in the wastewater system. This stresses the wastewater system and costs money to maintain and repair. Some of these pollutants may also pose a risk to fish and the natural environment.





Wastewater from carpet cleaning can contain:

- Chemicals found in cleaning, sanitizing and deodorizing products
- Solids, such as carpet fibres, grit and hair
- Human and animal waste
- Oil and grease



DID YOU KNOW

A carpet cleaning company that cleans five or six homes a day uses more than 500 gallons of water each day. Much of that water is discharged as wastewater containing high quantities of fibre and pollutants.



Safeguarding the Wastewater System and the Environment

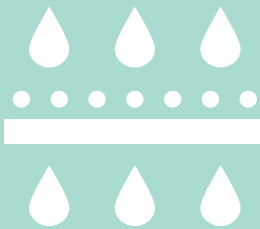
Recommended Practices

Carpet cleaning operators play an important role. Here are some recommended practices to help manage wastewater safely and responsibly:



1. Capture Wastewater

Never pour wastewater directly onto lawns or into storm drains or watercourses such as rivers, creeks and streams.



2. Screen Wastewater

Screen carpet cleaning wastewater to remove large particles and solids such as soil and carpet fibres before wastewater enters the wastewater system. Capture large particles and solids from the screen and place in the regular garbage for disposal. Discharge screened carpet cleaning wastewater into the sanitary sewer through a sink, toilet, bathtub or other drainage system that is connected to the sanitary sewer.



3. Avoid Harsh Chemicals

Avoid chlorinated spotting agents and spot removers such as perchloroethylene and trichloroethylene.



4. Inspect and Maintain Equipment

Inspect filters and screens daily for defects and replace when defects are found. Visually inspect hose connections, valves, filter gaskets, pumps and holding tanks for leaks at least once per week.



5. Cleaning Chemicals

Minimize the quantities of cleaning chemicals stored in your vehicle or shop. Appropriately dispose of old or used fluids and containers through a Provincial Take Back Program (if applicable) or by returning to the supplier. For more information, check the Recycling Council of British Columbia website at www.rcbc.bc.ca or call 604-RECYCLE.



6. Labelling

Label cleaning, sanitizing and deodorizing chemicals according to WHMIS requirements and store in a secure area where spills can be contained.



7. Clean Spills

Promptly clean up spills with a dry absorbent and appropriately dispose of used absorbents as outlined on the spill kits.



8. Staff Training

Train staff on the practices described in the Guide.



Reducing Pollutants in Wastewater

In Metro Vancouver, wastewater from carpet cleaning can be discharged by pouring it into a sink, toilet, bathtub or drainage system that is connected to the sanitary sewer system.

To safeguard the wastewater system and the natural environment, large particles and pollutants must be removed prior to discharge.

Many carpet cleaning operators are leading the industry by using biodegradable products. This not only helps the environment, but is appealing to consumers looking for an environmentally friendly alternative.



Screen carpet cleaning wastewater to remove large particles and solids such as soil and carpet fibres before wastewater enters the wastewater system

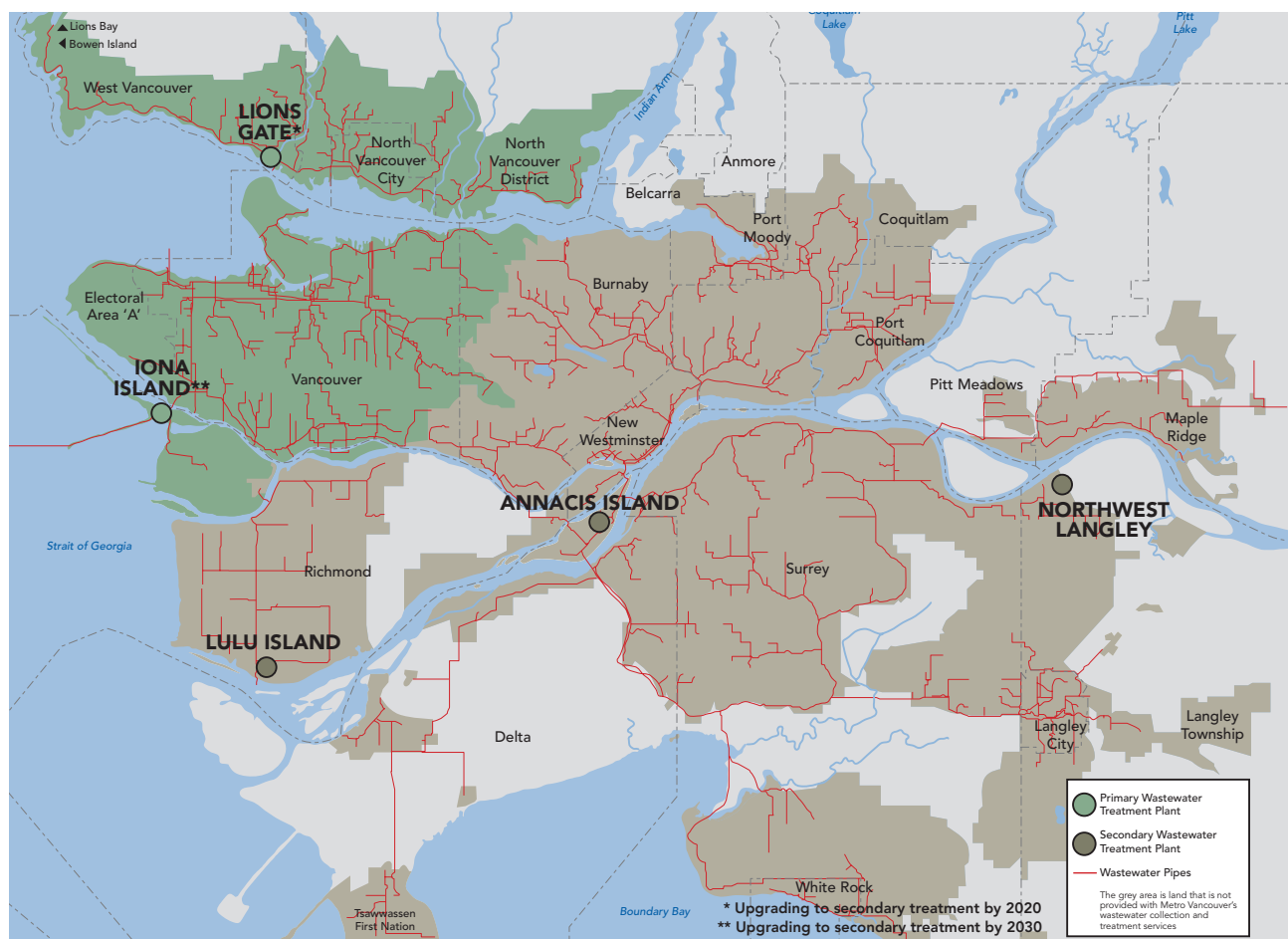
Understanding the Wastewater System

Metro Vancouver provides an important service to the region, collecting and treating wastewater to protect the environment and public health.

The wastewater system consists of private, municipal and regional trunk sewers that convey wastewater for treatment at one of five regional wastewater treatment plants. The treatment plants are regulated by the Provincial and Federal governments.

While Metro Vancouver and municipalities are responsible for managing approximately 50% of the wastewater treatment system, private businesses and residents are responsible for the other 50% of the system. That means, we have a shared responsibility to manage the wastewater system.

Metro Vancouver relies on a range of tools including codes and bylaws, education programs and guides to reduce or eliminate wastewater pollutants at their source.



In Metro Vancouver, there are estimated 6,400 km of private sewers, 7,100 km of municipal sewers and 530 km of Metro Vancouver sewers. The entire wastewater treatment system is approximately 14,030 km in length – that's the total distance from Vancouver to Halifax and back.

Complying with Regulations

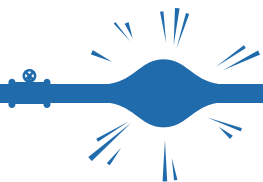
Regulations are in place to safeguard the wastewater system and protect the environment.

Metro Vancouver's Sewer Use Bylaw has been in effect since 1990. It applies to the direct or indirect discharge of waste into any sewer or drain connected to a sewage (also called wastewater) facility operated by Metro Vancouver.



DID YOU KNOW

A blockage or back up in a privately-owned section of the sewer system is the financial responsibility of the home or business owner.



The Sewer Use Bylaw is in place to:

- Protect human health, safety and the environment
- Protect the sewers and sewage facilities from damage and promote their efficient and cost-effective operation

Carpet cleaning operators are required to comply with the Sewer Use Bylaw. The Sewer Use Bylaw restricts the discharge of specific pollutants (including oil, grease and grit) into the sanitary sewer system.

All owners and operators should be familiar with Metro Vancouver's Sewer Use Bylaw. Non-compliance can result in penalties and fines.

All owners and operators should be familiar with Metro Vancouver's Sewer Use Bylaw. Non compliance can result in penalties and fines. Links to relevant codes and bylaws have been provided below.

Relevant Regulations

To find the regulations and requirements referred to in this guide, please go to:

Metro Vancouver Sewer Use Bylaw
www.metrovancouver.org (search for Metro Vancouver Sewer Use Bylaw)

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)
www.whmis.org

Notes

