

Floor Drains

How are they regulated ?

Discharge of fluid wastes from floor drains to the subsurface (leach field, drywell, etc) by businesses are regulated as Underground Injection Control (UIC) Wells. The discharge of fluid wastes from floor drains to the ground surface is a practice referred to as *day-lighting*. In either case, the activity is regulated by the Wastewater Management Division. Floor drains are subject to the Floor Drain Procedure signed by the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in October, 1993.

Day-lighting

Floor drain discharges to the ground surface are **prohibited** if the discharges result from vehicle maintenance areas or from vehicle washing facilities. Snow melt from vehicles in areas where service work is not performed may be day-lighted.

Injection Wells

All floor drains discharging to injection wells pose some risk to groundwater quality. Accordingly, the construction of a **new** floor drain in an area where vehicles are serviced or where hazardous chemicals are stored *is prohibited* unless the floor drain is connected to a public sewer or to a holding tank. Permission to connect to a holding tank or the public sewer must be obtained from the Wastewater Management Division's Regional Office prior to construction. If a holding tank is used, wastewater can be disposed of at the municipal wastewater treatment facility (if they agree to accept it) or via a certified hazardous waste hauler. In either case, you'll likely have to test to see if the wastewater meets the definition of 'hazardous' in the Hazardous Waste Management Rules.

All businesses with **existing** floor drains that discharge to the subsurface are required to register their floor drains with the Wastewater Management Division in Waterbury, VT. Contact 241-3822 to request a registration form.

In accordance with the 1993 Floor Drain Procedure signed by the Commissioner of the DEC, the Wastewater Management Division will develop a **procedure that will require the eventual permanent closure of any floor drain located in a vehicle service area** that is not connected either to a public sewer system or to a holding tank. As with new construction, the Regional Office of the Wastewater Management Division must be contacted prior to discharge to either a holding tank or public sewer. The schedule for closure and acceptable means for accomplishing closure will be addressed in the pending procedure. When the procedure is adopted, registered floor drain owners will be notified of the requirements.

Floor drains discharging to UIC wells located in areas where service work is not performed, and where hazardous materials are not stored, may be eligible to receive a permit. While exterior vehicle washing

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is permissible under the Procedure, it is unlikely that car wash facilities in general would qualify for a UIC permit due in part to the significant volume of wastewater typically generated by a car wash. No permit will be issued for "under the hood", "under vehicle", heavy equipment, or parts washing. It is likely that any permit issued for such restricted vehicle washing would require that floor drains have both grit traps and oil-water separators prior to any wastewater discharge to the subsurface. The permit might also specify a maintenance schedule for traps and separators, as well as periodic environmental monitoring for contaminants.

Best Management Practices

Overall Strategy

For *Vehicle Service Bays* your best option is: **Floor Drain Elimination**

- ➡ Floor drain elimination is required in areas where vehicle *maintenance* is occurring. But, if that is not possible, the Wastewater Management Division may allow you to utilize the system when you have shown that you can:
 - ⇒ Keep floor drains plugged during vehicle maintenance.
 - ⇒ Keep storage of hazardous materials or other synthetic fluid products in an area separate from where the floor drain is located.
 - ⇒ Collect wastewater in a holding tank for disposal to the municipal wastewater treatment facility (if they'll take it) or via a certified hazardous waste hauler. In either case, you'll likely have to test to see if the wastewater is hazardous.
 - ⇒ Keep floors as clean as possible .

For *Vehicle Wash Bays* your best options are listed below (starting with the best option)

- ➡ Eliminate floor drains in any area where vehicle *washing* is occurring.
- ➡ Re-route the floor drain to a municipal sewer line where available and where acceptable to the municipality. You must be certain that your wastewater is not a hazardous waste. Adding grit removal and oil/water separation is suggested and may be required by the municipal wastewater facility.
- ➡ Collect the wastewater in a storage tank and dispose of via a local wastewater treatment facility if available and acceptable to the municipality. You must be certain that your wastewater is not a hazardous waste. Use and maintain grit removal and oil/water separation to insure a 'clean' wastewater.
- ➡ Use and maintain grit removal and oil/water separation prior to discharging to an on-site injection well (or leach field) to insure a 'clean' wastewater. Understand that ground water standards must be met.

While the Wastewater Management Division has only been responsible for overseeing the Department's floor drain rules since December of 1997 (prior to that oversight was the responsibility of the Water Supply Division), the rules have been in effect since 1993. This is not a new requirement.