

Car Wash Sludge

Car wash sludge refers to the material that collects in the grit traps, mud traps, and sumps of car washes. This material mainly consists of dirt, sand, grit, grime, and other substances that are washed off the outside of vehicles. There is also the potential for improper disposal of other materials by customers. Car wash sludge is a solid waste and potentially a hazardous waste and is subject to DEQ waste disposal requirements.

Car wash grit trap sludge is not sludge generated from other washing and rinsing activities, such as:

- Pesticide vehicle/equipment cleaning.
- Engine cleaning/degreasing.
- Tanker truck cleaning.
- Chemical container rinsing.
- Livestock vehicle washing.

Sludge generated from the above listed activities is subject to more stringent disposal requirements, as specified in OAC 252:515, and its disposal may also require a wastewater permit from DEQ's Water Quality Division.

Car wash operators have two options for disposal of car wash sludge:

- It may be disposed of at any facility that is permitted to accept it, or
- It may potentially be approved for use as fill material if approved by DEQ's Solid Waste Section. You may contact the Solid Waste Section at (405) 702-5100 for more information.

If used as fill material, the car wash owner is responsible for ensuring that the sludge is uncontaminated material and is approved by DEQ. Batches of sludge have the potential to vary in chemical concentration and individual batches should receive approval before use.

All testing of car wash sludge must be done by the State Environmental Lab (SEL) or a DEQ-accredited private lab. You may contact the SEL at (405) 702-1000 for additional information.

In addition to testing and approval requirements, the application of car wash sludge as fill material is not allowed at the following locations:



Table 1: Screening Levels Applicable to Car Wash Grit Trap Sludge

Arsenic	29 mg/kg	Lead	400 mg/kg
Barium	1,600 mg/kg	Selenium	5 mg/kg
Benzene	0.03 mg/kg	Silver	34 mg/kg
Cadmium	8 mg/kg	Toluene	12 mg/kg
Chromium	38 mg/kg	TPH	50 mg/kg
Ethylbenzene	13 mg/kg	Xylenes	190 mg/kg

These screening level values only pertain to car wash sludge used as fill material and are not applicable levels for residential property or industrial sites where workers are likely exposed. Any approvals for car wash sludge to be applied to residential property or industrial sites will require different screening levels.

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- Any residential setting;
- In areas of parks or recreation areas that are frequented by the public, such as picnic areas or campgrounds;
- In any area frequented by children (schools, day care centers, playgrounds, etc.);
- Within 100 feet of any surface waters (lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands, intermittent streams, creeks, etc.);
- Within 500 feet of any surface source of drinking water;
- Within 300 feet of any public or private groundwater well; or
- Within 10 feet of the property line.

If you have questions about the disposal of car wash sludge, please contact DEQ's Environmental Complaints and Local Services Division at (405) 702-6100.

