



# Dumpster Pad Cleaning

by Carlos Gonzales, New Look Power Wash, [www.NewLookPowerWash.com](http://www.NewLookPowerWash.com)



Before & after photos courtesy of New Look Power Wash, [www.NewLookPowerWash.com](http://www.NewLookPowerWash.com)

No doubt about it, dumpster pads and their interior conditions can be an eyesore. The accumulation of months of food grease, stains from garbage and just plain old dirt is often a pressure washer's worst nightmare.

Cleaning dumpster pad areas on your commercial account can mean the difference between your client offering you high praise or questioning your ability to perform specifications of your contract with them.

In this article, tips and suggestions are offered so that you can be equipped with the initial knowledge of knowing what you need to tackle some of the worst dumpster pads on the planet. You should also have a proper understanding of how to deal with wastewater in accordance with the law.

Preferably you are equipped with hot water capability. This in itself will afford you an advantage over the use of cold water when cleaning greasy concrete. Should the use of hot water not be in your arsenal just yet, you can still utilize the suggestions outlined here and still obtain measurable success.

### **Equipment Check List**

- Hot Water Pressure Washer
- Stiff Broom
- 2 Gallon Pump Up Sprayer
- Soap/Degreaser
- Elbow Grease
- Surface Cleaner
- 15 Degree QC

Prior to firing up your rig you will need to remove all items off the dumpster pad. Laundry bags, grease buckets overflowing with old discarded grease and trash are just a few of the many items that often greet contractors when access to the dumpster pad is made. Ensure you are wearing protective gloves and safety goggles as the chances of running into a dead rat or two is highly probable. If possible, roll out all the trash containers off the pad as well. Sweep up all accumulated dirt and trash.

Pretreating the grease buildup with a degreasing soap is a critical step and serves as one of the key steps to achieve the results you want. However, pretreating is just one of many steps that are necessary in order to obtain that “wow” reaction from your client. The 2 gallon pump sprayer is a handy tool to have for pretreating the accumulated grease area. Spray a liberal amount of your degreaser to the point where you begin to observe the “puddle effect” on the greasy concrete. Dwell times vary from one product to the next but on average you want your dwell times to be in the 15 minute range at minimum.

### **The Suds Say It All**

Agitate the pretreated area with your push broom to the point where suds are created

due to the agitation. The color of the suds will reveal several important things. This will determine whether or not you proceed to the next step or continue with your pump up application and agitate again.

If the suds turn a very deep dark brown then this shows you that not only is your degreaser working but more importantly that an additional application is advisable.

Prior to reapplying, ensure you agitate the original pretreatment vigorously into the pores of the concrete with some good old elbow grease.

Reapply your pretreatment mix with the pump up sprayer. The amount applied should be enough to only get the surface wet again. Bring out that push broom and agitate some more.

### **Repeat if necessary**

You will begin to see those deep dark brown suds that were observed on the very first application turn into a light chocolate milky

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appearance. This is a good indicator that your soap has dislodged and/or removed the grease from the surface. One important note about the soap that you apply, it is only as strong as the chemicals that make up the formula. My company has had positive success with a variety of degreasers on the market today.

### **Time to Wash the Pad**

As your pretreatment continues to dwell, now would be a perfect time to prepare your general purpose mix in preparation to clean the entire pad. The most common way to saturate the pad with a general mix is either through downstreaming or x-jetting. Don't rush your dwell times here. Give the general purpose mix the same dwell time consideration you afforded the pretreatment. Often, contractors rush through this step as they are anxious to get the surface cleaner on the concrete.

Once you are satisfied that the soaps have had plenty of time to "do their thing," surface clean the pad. Water temps should be no lower than 165 degrees. As you surface clean over the accumulated grease stains on the concrete, you will begin to see the positive results from the fruits of your labor. Obviously there will be blotches of grease that surface cleaner may not have been able to "cut into." Do not spend

much time going back and forth over these areas with your surface cleaner. You will be able to hit these blotches during the rinse down step.

### **Rinse and Roll 'Em Up**

The rinsing part of dumpster pad cleaning is important, as it is the step that allows you to actually see what has cleaned up and what has not. With a 15-degree tip begin to hit those grease blotches in the same fashion as you would when popping gum off concrete. Another recommendation would be to bump your water temp up an additional 10 degrees. Pay particular attention around the grease pit area as this is commonly the area where grease is difficult to remove and clean. Rinse your walls and concrete with plenty of water.

As you are rinsing your way out of the dumpster pad, you hopefully have a huge smile on your face due to the fact that the dirty dumpster pad that you started with is now a shining piece of work, and your client will shake your hand and say, "Job well done."

*Carlos Gonzales is the owner of New Look Power Wash, a pressure cleaning company that provides services in California. To learn more, visit their website at [www.NewLookPowerWash.com](http://www.NewLookPowerWash.com).*