

Pressure Washing

About 7 minutes to deliver

Three thousand psi cuts skin without touching it, and the wound looks like a scratch for the first hour.

A domestic pressure washer runs at two to three thousand psi. A commercial one goes far higher. At those pressures water is a cutting tool — it does not need to touch you to open you up, and it carries whatever is on the surface into the wound with it.

THE INJURY PEOPLE UNDERESTIMATE

A pressure washer wound looks trivial. A small slit, little bleeding, not much pain at first. Underneath, water and contamination have been driven along the tissue, and the infection risk is severe. It is treated as a high pressure injection injury — the same emergency as hydraulic fluid.

- Go to an emergency room the same day, and say those words.
- Never test the spray against your hand, your boot, or anything you are holding.
- Never point the wand at a person, including to rinse dust off them.

USING IT

- Both hands on the wand, braced. A trigger pull produces real kickback, and the first pull of the day is the one that surprises people.
- Start wide and step in. Fit the widest tip that will do the job — a zero-degree tip is a cutting jet and is rarely the right choice.
- Never on a ladder. The kickback pushes you off it. Scaffold, a lift, or an extension wand from the ground.
- Watch your footing. You are making a wet, soapy, slippery surface and then standing on it, often walking backwards.
- Depressurise before changing a tip, and squeeze the trigger to bleed the line after shutting down.

AROUND THE MACHINE

- GFCI on any electric unit — 1926.404(b)(1)(ii) — and inspect the cord before every use. Water and temporary power is the combination that kills.
- Petrol units outdoors only. A petrol pressure washer inside a garage, a basement or a partly enclosed space is a carbon monoxide fatality, and it happens every year.
- Hot water units burn. The wand, the hose and the spray all reach scalding temperature.

PPE

Face shield over safety glasses, waterproof gloves, and boots with real tread — never open shoes. Hearing protection on the petrol units. And check what you are washing off: old paint, mould, bird droppings and chemical residue all go airborne in the spray and end up in your face.

ASK THE CREW

- What tip is on the wand, and does the job need one that aggressive?
- Is anyone planning to do this off a ladder?
- Where is the petrol unit going to sit while it runs?

29 CFR 1926.28 · 29 CFR 1910.132 · 29 CFR 1926.404

This is a toolbox talk, not a course. It is general awareness on one topic — not site-specific, not a hazard assessment, and not a substitute for assessment of your workplace by a competent person, your written programs, or manufacturers' instructions. It does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. Regulations change; verify against the current standard. Whoever delivers it is responsible for deciding it is suitable and sufficient for the work. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, not a substitute for professional medical care or certified emergency-response training, and it confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. Migna Safety Solutions · training.mignasafetysolutions.com

v2026-09-08 · <https://training.mignasafetysolutions.com/toolbox-talks/pressure-washing>

ATTENDANCE RECORD

Pressure Washing

About 7 minutes to deliver · 29 CFR 1926.28 · 29 CFR 1910.132 · 29 CFR 1926.404

DateJob / site

Delivered byCompany

#	Print name	Signature	Date
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			

I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

Form supplied by Migna Safety Solutions · v2026-09-08 · <https://training.mignasafety.com/toolbox-talks/pressure-washing>

Keep this sheet with your training records. This form is supplied blank by Migna Safety Solutions — we did not deliver this session, were not present, and make no representation about what was said or who attended. A toolbox talk is general awareness on one topic and does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. The employer remains responsible for site-specific hazard assessment and for the training its workers are required to have. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, and confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. training.mignasafety.com