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## Building Department Handout

# Drains in Private Residential Garages

**Floor drains** in residential garages are fairly common, especially in garages which are heated. These are used to dispose of melt water and other accumulated precipitation which enters the garages on vehicles, and in some cases, to dispose of wash water if vehicles are washed indoors. Drips and spills of various automotive fluids can also enter the drains, as can other types of household products stored or used in the garages. Intentional disposal of household hazardous waste may also occur.

Homeowners may also choose the option of running the floor drain "to daylight", which means that the floor drain effluent would discharge onto the ground surface outside the garage. This would only be allowed if the following conditions are met:

1. Local AHJ approves (Listed mechanical system to collect by products- "catch basin, dry well, channel or trough" )
2. No commercial or industrial use of the garage
3. No discharge into surface water or surface depressions which lead to surface water (such as swales, ditches, and tile lines)
4. Discharged water must not cross property line
5. Discharge area must be easily visible to homeowner

### Code Analyst:

#### International Residential Code (IRC)

**R309.1** Floor surface. Garage floor surfaces shall be of approved noncombustible material. The area of floor used for parking of automobiles or other vehicles shall be sloped to facilitate the movement of liquids to a drain or toward the main vehicle entry doorway.

**International Plumbing Code (IPC) Section 103** 1003.1 where required. Interceptors and separators shall be provided to prevent the discharge of oil, grease, sand and other substances harmful or hazardous to the building drainage system, the public sewer, or sewage treatment plant or processes. 1003.2 Approval. The size, type and location of each interceptor and of each separator shall be designed and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the requirements of this section based on the anticipated conditions of use. Wastes that do not require treatment or separation shall not be discharged into any interceptor or separator.

**Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) Section 1016** - All garage floor drains must be connected according to the plumbing via sand oil interceptor. Section 1016.2 says advisable to protect the drainage system

**Rationale** - Homeowner have a vested interest in protecting their property. They are not likely to discharge materials which would visibly impact their property. The surface discharge will make them more aware of the impacts of their actions. It is more likely to be an aesthetic problem than a health problem, since it does not contain sewage or other sources of pathogenic organisms. Because the person taking the action (the homeowner who disposes into the floor drain) will be the only person affected by that action, there will be a high motivation for self-control. Because of the limited scope of the facility, the chances of undesired environmental impacts are less than for commercial/industrial uses.