

TRUCK WASH RESOURCE LIBRARY

The First 90 Days: What to Do Before You Spend a Dollar

Every truck wash project that gets built follows roughly the same sequence, whether the owner realizes it or not. The projects that stall are usually missing a step, not missing effort. This guide lays out what the first three months of a disciplined truck wash project actually look like, before land is under contract and before a dollar of hard cost is spent.

Nothing in this sequence involves buying equipment. The equipment decision arrives on schedule once the site earns it.

DAYS 1 TO 30 PICK THE LANE AND SCREEN SITES

Select one or two target freight corridors.

Use traffic composition, fleet and distribution density, and competitive supply as the filter, not just a general sense of where trucks drive. Note where the nearest existing wash options sit and what they can and cannot serve.

Screen candidate sites against truck geometry first.

Usable acreage, 40 to 55 foot turning paths, 180 to 420 foot stacking depth, and full-movement access. Most parcels fail here, which is exactly why this screen comes before anything else. A site that fails on geometry fails permanently.

Build a short list, not a single option.

Carry two or three candidate sites in parallel through the early screen. Land deals fall through for reasons that have nothing to do with your project, and a short list protects your timeline.

DAYS 31 TO 60 PRE-SCREEN THE SITE AND QUALIFY DEMAND

Pre-screen entitlement and utilities before money is at risk.

Confirm the jurisdiction's zoning posture toward heavy vehicle uses, wastewater capacity and pre-treatment requirements, water availability, and the general shape of the municipal review process for each candidate site.

Qualify the demand base within routing distance.

Identify the carriers, distribution centers, food-grade haulers, and RV traffic that would realistically route through each site. Fleet demand should be qualified during site selection, not assumed after opening.

Open early fleet conversations.

These conversations happen while a site is still under contract and in entitlement, not after the ribbon cutting. Drive-up traffic from owner-operators and pass-through carriers anchors early volume, and fleet agreements layer on as the facility proves turnaround time.

Narrow to a preferred site.

By day 60, one candidate should stand out clearly on geometry, entitlement posture, and demand. That is the site worth pursuing under contract.

DAYS 61 TO 90 CONTROL THE LAND AND ASSEMBLE THE TEAM

Negotiate the purchase or lease.

Structure contingency periods that protect the project through feasibility and entitlement, so the site can be walked away from if something material surfaces during due diligence.

Begin assembling the architecture and engineering team.

Entitlement work starts here, not after closing. The site plan, utility coordination, and application materials take real lead time to prepare correctly.

Start the equipment conversation on facts, not assumptions.

With the site's geometry, projected volume, and water conditions coming into focus, the touchless, friction, or hybrid decision, and the manufacturer decision, can now be made on real information instead of a generic pitch.

Set the entitlement submittal as the next milestone.

The goal exiting day 90 is a site under contract and a clear path toward a complete, defensible municipal application, not a wash system on order.

Why the sequence matters more than the speed

Twelve months of disciplined execution along this sequence puts an operator under construction on a corridor position that did not exist in the market a year earlier and cannot be quickly replicated by whoever arrives second. The first 90 days set the foundation for that outcome. Owners who skip ahead to equipment before the site, entitlement, and demand work is done are not moving faster. They are moving the risk to later, when it is more expensive to discover.

This roadmap is a general sequence, not a project plan for a specific site or jurisdiction. Big Rig Development Group manages this exact process, start to finish, for clients developing commercial truck wash facilities nationally.