

A person wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and jeans is using a black Ryobi pressure washer to clean a brick wall. The pressure washer is connected to a hose and a spray lance. In the background, there is a green lawn and some trees. A white text box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title "Guidelines For The Proper Selection Of A Pressure Washer".

Guidelines For The Proper Selection Of A Pressure Washer

When it comes to selecting a suitable pressure washer, the decision ultimately depends on the nature of your project. Surface size, cleaning location and frequency of use are a few items to consider when determining which type of pressure washer is right for you.

Types of Pressure Washers

Gas Pressure Washers - Gas pressure washers offer high power with increased mobility. These units are capable of handling the toughest jobs and will help you complete large projects fast.

Pros: high power; mobility, faster cleaning

Cons: noise, weight, exhaust emissions, maintenance requirements, cost

Electric Pressure Washers - Electric pressure washers are typically well-suited for small to medium-sized projects. With a wide variety of designs, ranging from small hand-held units to larger cart-style units, these pressure washers offer a convenient and affordable solution for those many projects around the house.

Pros: size, light weight; low noise, instant start; low maintenance, low cost; no exhaust emissions

Cons: lower power, requires nearby electrical outlet

Power / Pressure Ratings

Understanding how pressure washers are rated for their performance is key to selecting a pressure washer. Pounds per square inch, (PSI) and gallons per minute (GPM) are two of the most common measurements used by manufacturers to advertise the performance characteristics of a unit. PSI measures pressure and GPM measures flow rate. A pressure washer's PSI rating is the maximum amount of force (pressure) discharged by the pressure washer. A pressure washer's GPM rating refers to the water flow during one minute of operation. The higher the PSI and GPM, the more cleaning power available and the more things you will be able to clean.



Advertised PSI and GPM ratings on pressure washer packaging are not always what you get. It is recommended that you look for the PWMA certification label on the packaging which demonstrates the pressure washer meets the industry performance standard and that the ratings have been tested and verified by an independent laboratory. Purchasing a pressure washer from a PWMA certification program participant ensures you will take home the power you were

promised.

The following chart provides guidance on the power you may need from your pressure washer for your projects:

	Light Duty	Medium Duty	Heavy Duty
Pressure Range (PSI)	Up to 1,900	1,900 to 2,800	2,800 or more
Water Flow (GPM)	1.1 – 1.4	1.8 – 2.5	2.5 +
Typical Applications			
Patio Furniture	✓	✓	✓
Grills	✓	✓	✓
Vehicles	✓	✓	✓
Walkways / Stairs	✓	✓	✓
Boats	✓	✓	✓
Windows	✓	✓	✓
Lawnmowers	✓	✓	✓
ATV Dirt Bikes	✓	✓	✓
Driveways & Sidewalks		✓	✓
Siding		✓	✓
Paint Prep		✓	✓
Decks / Patios			✓
Farm Equipment			✓
Oil Stains			✓
Removes Paint, Rust & Graffiti			✓

Features

When selecting a pressure washer, you may wish to consider the various features and options that may accompany a pressure washer. Here are some items to consider:

- For electric pressure washers, ensure the unit you are selecting has a built in ground fault interrupter. This will help keep the operator safe from electrical hazards.
- Most units are sold with various tips and nozzles. In addition, there are a wide variety of accessories available to make cleaning even easier. Be sure you choose the accessories to match the projects you plan to complete.
- If you plan to use a detergent or soap for your project, look for a unit that has a built in dispenser. This will simplify the dilution process of the detergent or soap and reduce the overall time of your project.
- For gas pressure washers, consider the features that are most important to you and that best fit your cleaning needs. This may include the engine, pump, spray nozzles, hose type / length, etc. There are also models that can reduce noise, offer improved fuel consumption, and/or make maintenance and starting easier.

Maintenance & Safety Tips

- A properly maintained pressure washer will provide optimum performance for years. Ensure you follow the manufacturer's guidelines to properly maintain your pressure washer.
- Be sure to read the operator's manual provided by the manufacturer and always operate your pressure washer in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines. Be sure to understand and follow the safety guidelines outlined in the operator's manual before using your pressure washer.

When purchasing a pressure washer, consider the advantages of purchasing a pressure washer manufactured by a PWMA member. Members are dedicated to product standards and accurate performance ratings.



The Pressure Washer Manufacturers' Association (PWMA) is a non-profit trade association of manufacturers of pressure washers. The association was first formed in 1997 to develop standards for pressure washers and to increase understanding of pressure washers by manufacturers, consumers, and the general public. Our members include major manufacturers of pressure washers in North America.

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