



With the hundreds, even thousands, of pressure washers on the market today, we know it can be difficult to select the unit that best meets your needs. That's why we at Alkota have put together this Buyer's Guide. This guide answers the questions about pressure washers that we most often field from our customers. If you have any additional questions about pressure washers or a specific unit, be sure to **contact your dealer or Alkota at 800-255-6823.**

What's most important: HP, PSI or GPM?

First of all, it's important to understand what each of these acronyms means. HP stands for horsepower, PSI for pounds per square inch and GPM for gallons per minute.



Model shown: the Tiny Terror Xtreme Series

The HP of a pressure washer is divided up to produce both the pressure at which the water is released (PSI) and the number of gallons that are released (GPM). For example, a 2.3 HP motor can produce 2.1 GPM at 1600 PSI or it can produce 3.0 GPM at 1100 PSI. Cleaning power is a function of both volume and pressure.

Size does matter.

When selecting a pressure washer, first determine the minimum PSI you need to break the bond between the dirt and the surface you are cleaning. The chart on this page can help you, or you may wish to contact your dealer if you need help.

After selecting a pressure washer with at least that PSI level, look at the GPM rate. The higher the GPM, the faster your cleaning job will be. That's because once you have the necessary pressure to remove the dirt and grime, the only way to make your job faster is to increase the rate at which water is released.

You can lower the cleaning pressure capacity of a larger washer simply by changing spray nozzles or using a variable pressure wand. You can not make a smaller washer bigger. Horsepower is horsepower; a 2.3 HP motor can not pump over its capacity.

Always buy a unit big enough for your needs. Buying a unit that does not have adequate cleaning power will cost you extra clean-up time and repairs in the future.

PSI Needed for Various Applications

Use	Minimum PSI Needed
Cars and SUVs	1500+ PSI
Industrial applications	1500+ PSI
Trucks, trailers, tractors, combines, silage choppers, cotton pickers	1800+ PSI
Decks, fences, siding	2000+ PSI
Livestock shelters	3000 PSI
Large surfaces such as driveways, patios	3000 PSI

What are units of cleaning power?

The measurement units of cleaning power is an easy way to rate pressure washers. To determine the units of cleaning power for a machine, multiply the PSI by the GPM (PSI x GPM). This calculation helps you compare different pressure washers, to determine which one is most powerful. The higher the number, the more powerful the pressure washer.

For example, let's say you are considering one washer with 2 GPM and 3000 PSI and another washer with 4 GPM and 2000 PSI. Which is better? The units of cleaning power on the first washer are 6,000, while the second unit has 8,000 cleaning units. The second machine is more powerful and will likely be the best choice for your needs.

Units of Cleaning Power

GPM	PSI	Units of Cleaning Power
2.0	1600	3,200
3.0	1100	3,300
3.0	2000	6,000
4.0	1800	7,200
4.0	3000	12,000
4.8	1800	8,640
5.0	3000	15,000