

Take Care of Water When Washing Vehicles

You probably never thought that washing your car could be a threat to the environment, but it can be, if not done properly.

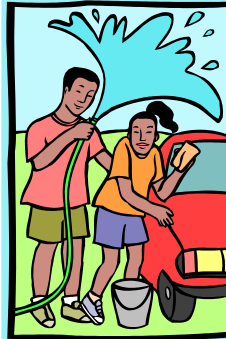
Detergents used to wash vehicles can harm fish, wildlife, & aquatic plants. Wash water can flow to a nearby storm drain that connects to the Indian River Lagoon or St. Johns River.

In addition to the suds, road grime and motor fluids that are removed from your vehicle may also flow to the storm drain and to our precious rivers, creeks and lakes.

To avoid pollution, it is best to wash your vehicle at a commercial car wash that sends the wash water to a treatment facility.



Personal Vehicle Washing



If you would rather wash your car yourself, you can reduce the chances of polluting our water bodies by washing your vehicle over the grass, rather than on a driveway or parking lot. Remember, dirt is not the only thing that rinses off a sudsy vehicle. Heavy metals, oil and grease are in the wash water, too! Washing over the grass can filter the pollutants and help to minimize impact on the environment. Try phosphate-free soap since phosphates can lead to algal blooms in our water bodies. When you finish the job, be sure to dispose of the leftover wash water down a sink, not onto a paved surface or into the gutter or storm drain!

Car Wash Fund Raisers

One last caution: Kids and parents planning a car wash fundraising event should know that they might be violating clean water laws if run-off is not contained and disposed of properly. Before you begin, determine how to dispose of the wash water properly. Plan to protect storm drains. If possible, wash water should flow to a grassy area where it can soak in. Utilize low-flow hose attachments. Empty wash buckets into a sink, not the storm drain.



Simple Pollution Prevention Practices

- Know the Flow! Determine where the wash water will flow and make sure it does not reach a storm drain.
- Wash vehicles on a flat lawn where the water can soak in.
- Utilize low-flow hose attachments.
- Use phosphate-free soap.
- Use half the recommended amount of soap.
- Avoid use of engine solvents or degreasers anywhere near a storm drain.
- If flow of water toward storm drains cannot be avoided, stop pollution by using containment booms or covers around the storm drain.
- For more information, call 321-633-2016, ext 52725.

Help prevent pollution by washing your vehicle at a commercial car wash. Their wash water is captured for treatment.