

# Clean Water begins at home!

## Auto Maintenance & Washing

Weekend mechanics enjoy saving money by changing their own oil or antifreeze, topping off the battery with water, and attending to other mechanical tasks. The following tips will help you minimize the environmental impacts from drip and spills.

Similarly, many people takes advantage of sunny days to wash their cars at home. When these cars are washed in driveways and streets, the water used typically flows into a storm drain or ditch, leading directly to the nearest stream, lake, or groundwater supply. Soaps and detergents (even biodegradable ones) along with the oil and grime being washed off of the car, can have harmful effects on fish and other aquatic wildlife.

Here are some tips to minimize impacts when washing or servicing your own car:

### SERVICING

- Spilled antifreeze can be deadly to children, pets, and wildlife. Use care draining and collecting antifreeze to prevent accidental spills. Use pans to catch spills.
- Service your car on concrete, asphalt, or over a plastic tarp for easy cleanup of spills and leaks.
- Recycle all oils, antifreeze, solvents, and batteries. Many local car parts dealers and gas stations accept used oil. Used oil can be recycled with your curbside recycling.



- NEVER dump automotive fluids or solvents on the ground or in a storm drain, street gutter, or water body.
- Do not mix wastes. Certain compounds become contaminated when mixed with other, rendering them unsuitable for recycling. Put waste in separate containers that are labeled and stored properly. (See Hazardous Materials fact sheet for more tips and information about storage and disposal.)
- To dispose of oil filters, punch a hole in the top and let them drain for 24 hours into a storage container. After draining, wrap the filter in plastic and put it in with your regular garbage.
- Keep a bag of kitty litter on hand to absorb spills. Sprinkle a thick layer on the spill to absorb it, then put the used litter in a plastic bag and dispose of it in your garbage.
- Use a tarp to catch material resulting from grinding, sanding, and painting. Dispose of this waste by double-bagging it and placing it in your garbage.

## WASHING

- Don't wash your car if rain is expected.
- Consider taking your car to a commercial carwash that has a water-recycle system and discharges wastewater into the sanitary sewer for treatment.
  - Purchase products that allow you to clean a vehicle without water.
  - Wash your car directly on your lawn or make sure the water you use drains to a vegetated area where the water and soap can soak into the ground, trapping pollutants in the soil instead of running off into a water body.
  - If you use soaps and detergents, select products without phosphates.
  - Use a nozzle on your hose which will help conserve water.



For more information, please call the Clark County Clean Water Division at (360) 397-2121 or visit [www.clark.wa.gov/stormwater](http://www.clark.wa.gov/stormwater).



For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office: **Voice** (360) 397-2322; **Relay** 711 or (800) 833-6388; **Fax** (360) 397-6165; **E-mail** ADA@clark.wa.gov.