

## Clean Water is Important to All of Us!

It's up to all of us to make it happen. In recent years sources of pollution like industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced. Now more than 60 percent of water pollution comes from things like cars leaking oil; fertilizers from farms, lawns, and gardens; pet waste; residential car washing; and failing septic tanks.

All these sources add up to a big pollution problem. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water too—and that adds up to a pollution solution!

## Why Do We Need Clean Water?

Having a clean environment is of primary importance for our health and economy. Clean waterways provide recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, and add beauty to our landscape. All of us benefit from clean water - and all of us have a role in getting and keeping our lakes, rivers, wetlands, and ground waters clean.

## Protect Our Watersheds One Drop at a Time

**Your actions can help keep our water clean.  
Find out how and spread the word!**



**WHEN YOU'RE WASHING YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY, REMEMBER YOU'RE NOT JUST WASHING YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY.**

## Car Washing

**For more information about protecting our water visit our website or contact the agency listed below.**

Cover Image Courtesy of Puget Sound Action Team, a cooperative venture between the Washington State Department of Ecology, King County and the cities of Bellevue, Seattle and Tacoma



Contact Information

**"Only Rain Down the Storm Drain!"**

# What's the problem with washing the car?



There's no problem with washing your car. It's just how and where you do it.

When you wash your car in the driveway or road, the soap, together with the dirt, oil, and grit washed from your car, flows along the curb and into nearby storm drains, which run directly into our rivers, streams, wetlands, and lakes.

The soap, wax, oil, grease, and other grime from your car cause pollution, which is unhealthy for fish and other creatures that live in and near the water.

Also, most soap contains phosphates and other chemicals that harm fish and water quality. The phosphates from the soap can cause excess algae to grow. Algae blooms look bad, smell bad, and harm water quality. As algae decays, the process uses up oxygen in the water that fish need.

*You should never allow anything but clean water to get into the storm drains.*

## Where Do All of Those Storm Drains Lead?



Did you know that storm drains are NOT connected to sanitary sewer systems and treatment plants?

The purpose of storm drains is to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding. Untreated storm water and the pollutants it carries flow directly into our creeks, rivers, and eventually the Great Lakes.

## How Can You Wash Your Car *and* Help Keep Our Environment Clean?

You can help keep our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater clean by applying the following tips.

- If allowed by your local community, wash your car on the lawn so the ground can filter the water naturally.\*

\* Please check local ordinances before washing or parking your vehicle on the lawn!

- Use soap sparingly.
- Use a hose nozzle with a trigger to save water when you don't need it.
- Pour your bucket of soapy water down the sink when you're done, NOT in the street.
- Avoid using engine and wheel cleaners or degreasers.
- Best of all, take your vehicle to a commercial car wash, especially if you plan to clean the engine or the bottom of your car. Most car washes reuse wash water several times before sending it to the sanitary sewer system for treatment.

***Together we can stop water pollution at the source!***