



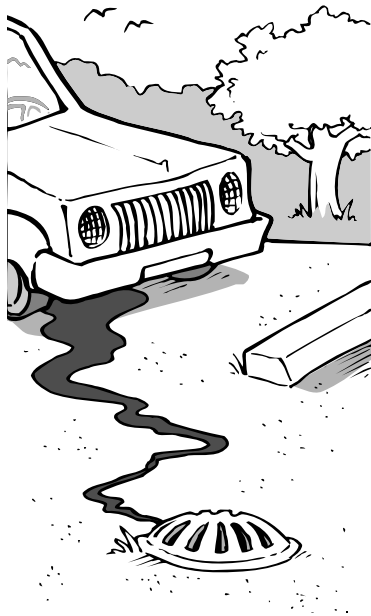
Car Care

Guide No. 4



Why be concerned?

Washing cars in your driveway can add pollutants to streams and rivers. Wash water that enters storm drains often contains detergents, oil, grease, heavy metals and dirt. Storm drains eventually discharge directly to local waterways.



Vehicle fluids dumped down a storm drain or directly into a waterway can cause serious problems. Four quarts of oil, the amount it takes to fill an automobile's engine, can form an eight acre oil slick in a river. Other vehicle fluids such as antifreeze are poisonous to people, fish and wildlife. Many cats and dogs have died from drinking sweet-tasting puddles of antifreeze found on driveways, in ditches or near storm drains.

Washing Tips

- Wash your car at a commercial car wash that uses water efficiently and disposes of the wash water properly. Or, wash your car on the lawn to prevent soapy runoff from entering storm drains or roadside ditches.
- Remove dirt around the wheels first with a wire brush. Collect the soil with a broom and dispose of it in a manner that will keep it out of storm drains.
- Use plain water whenever possible or non-phosphate biodegradable detergents and mild soaps, such as vegetable oil-based soaps.
- Wash one section of the car at a time and rinse it quickly using a pistol grip nozzle with high pressure and low volume.
- You may want to check with your City or Township to determine whether parking your car on your lawn for a brief period of time to accomplish car washing is permitted.



Car Maintenance Tips

- If you change vehicle fluids like motor oil or antifreeze at home, take the waste fluids to a recycling center (see "Getting Help") or an oil change facility.
- Always use a drip pan under your work and use funnels when transferring fluids. Investigate using an oil change kit designed to absorb used oil.
- Never mix waste oil with gasoline, solvents or other liquids before recycling.
- Change vehicle fluids in the garage whenever possible. If a spill occurs, pour kitty litter, sawdust or cornmeal on the spill to absorb the liquid. Place the waste material in a strong plastic bag and dispose with your trash.
- Inspect vehicles regularly for leaking oil and fluids, and make repairs immediately after problems are detected.

Recreation Vehicles and the Disposal of Sanitary Waste

Currently, there are no municipal authorities in Washtenaw County that provide sanitary waste disposal generated from recreation vehicles. Be certain to properly dispose of RV sanitary wastes at your campground or park designated facility since it may be difficult to locate alternative facilities that will accept sanitary wastes from RVs not using their campground services. Check the telephone directory for any local campgrounds that may provide this service.

GETTING HELP

- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (800) 662-9278
- Washtenaw County Household Hazardous Waste (734) 222-3950
- Home Toxics Disposal Program (734) 222-6865