

**W**e all know that cars cause air pollution, but did you know that cars also cause water pollution? As we drive, our vehicles leave bits of tires, brakes dust and rusty metal on the street. When we park, our vehicles leave stains of oil, grease and other fluids on driveways and parking lots. Less visible are the tiny exhaust particles that gradually settle out of the air or come down with the rain and snow. What happens to all this pollutants when it rains?

Rain and melting snow wash auto pollutants off the pavement, down the gutter, and into storm drains. Under these drains are pipes that carry the dirty water to our streams, lakes and aquifers. Even on sunny days, polluted water often flows out of storm sewers. Have you ever seen mounds of foam, streaks of blue, an oily sheen? The foam may come from soapy water that runs down the street when we wash cars in our driveways. The bright blue streaks are probably antifreeze drained from radiators. The oily sheen may come from used motor oil from vehicle leaks or oil dumped in the storm drain. You can help stop this kind of pollution. Explain to your family and friends that storm sewers carry water directly to our lakes and streams. They do not connect to wastewater treatment plants or get any kind of treatment.



### Recycle Oil

Old motor oil can be reprocessed and used again and again. Just put it in a container with a tight lid such as a plastic jug or metal container and take it to a community oil recycling center. Don't pour anything else in with the oil because contaminated oil cannot be recycled. Recycling is the only safe way to get rid of used motor oil. Never use old oil to kill weeds or to oil roads. Oil poured down the storm drain ends up in our lakes and streams. The five quarts from your car could create an oil slick the size of two football fields or pollute a million gallons of drinking water.

<http://www.co.utah.ut.us/Dept/PubWrks/Storm.asp>

### Use Commercial Car Washes

Taking your car to a commercial car wash is a good way to protect our lakes, streams and ground water. Dirty water from the car wash goes to a wastewater treatment plant where pollutants are removed. If you wash cars on a paved driveway or parking lot, the dirty water ends up in our lakes and streams. In addition, phosphates in the soap you use act like fertilizer. Weeds and algae decompose and use up oxygen needed by fish. Thinking of having a car wash to raise money for charity? Team up with a commercial car wash and sell car wash tickets for an environmentally-friendly fund raiser.

### Keep Your Car Tuned Up

Cars that run smoothly burn less fuel and causes less pollution. A tuned-up car saves you money by using up to 20% less gasoline. Regular tune-ups also reduce the amount of hydrocarbons, nitrous oxides and other pollutants that come out of your car's exhaust pipe. These chemicals pollute our

water as well as our air. Hydrocarbons can cause cancer and nitrous oxide is one of the ingredients in acid rain. Acid rain increases the toxicity of other pollutants in street runoff, which adds to the risk of sickness or death for fish and other aquatic life.

### **Repair Leaks**

Spots on your driveway or garage floor mean the engine or other vehicle component is leaking. Have the leak repaired right away. Then clean up the spot by using cat litter or another absorbent material to soak up the spill. Sweep up the cat litter and put it in a sealed bag in the trash for disposal. Do not scrub the spot with detergent and wash the dirty water into the street. Remember, all that dirty water ends up in lakes, streams and groundwater.

### **Recycle Antifreeze**

Used antifreeze should not be flushed down the drain because it has pollutants that may cause problems for sewage treatment plants or septic tanks. Antifreeze is very poisonous to people and animals. Because of its sweet taste and smell, antifreeze may attract children or pets. Drinking only three ounces may kill an adult and even less will kill children or pets.

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### **Used Batteries**

Return your used car or truck battery to the place where you bought your new battery. Other retailers may charge you for disposal. Be careful, old batteries may leak acid. Wear gloves and goggles and put the old battery in a leak-proof container. If you drop it, neutralize any spilled acid with baking soda or lime. Do not throw old batteries in the trash or bury them, you will be breaking the law. Old batteries contain hazardous chemicals that can leach through the soil and pollute our groundwater.