



What is the Problem with Car Washing?

Why Does It Matter Where I Wash My Car?

Many soaps contain chemicals that harm fish and degrade water quality. When you wash your car in the driveway, the soap together with the dirt, grime, grease, and oil washes from your car along impervious surfaces and ultimately may run directly into nearby lakes, rivers, or streams.

Some soaps may also contain phosphates, which can cause excess algae to grow in local waterways. Algae look bad, smell bad, and harm water quality. As algae decay, the process uses up oxygen in the water that fish need to survive.

What Can I Do?

Wash your car on the lawn or gravel. This will allow the water to percolate or soak into the ground where the soil can act as a natural filter. Make sure to dump your bucket in your sink or allow it to filter through the ground. Do not dump it down the driveway. Better yet, use a commercial car wash where the water is recycled and then sent to a wastewater treatment facility.

***When you wash your car in the driveway,
remember you're not just washing your car in the driveway.
Wash your car the right way!***

What About Charity Car Washes?

- Sell commercial car wash coupons instead.
- Hold your event at a commercial car wash.
- Conduct the car wash on a permeable surface such as gravel or grass.

Clean water is important to all of us. It is up to all of us to make it happen. In recent years, point sources of water pollution like industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced. Now, most water pollution comes from nonpoint sources like cars leaking oil, fertilizers from farms and gardens, 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. That adds up to a pollution solution!

Find out more about [how YOU can prevent stormwater pollution.](#)