



REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL RESIDENTIAL AUTOMOBILE WASHING

Automobile washing activities have the potential to contribute pollutants because road dust washed from vehicles may contain metals and hydrocarbons. Any leaking fluids washed from the automobile may also be carried to the storm drain by the wash water. Detergents used for automobile washing often contain phosphorus and foaming agents, which contribute to the degradation of our streets and creeks. The pollution prevention activities outlined in this fact sheet should be used to prevent the discharge of pollutants to the storm drain system.



Think before conducting automobile washing activities. Remember: *The ocean starts at YOUR front door.*

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

- Shake floor mats into trash can or vacuum to clean. Do not shake over ground.
- If using cleaners (such as acid-based wheel cleaners), use a rag to wipe product on and off; do not rinse cleaners off with water.
- If possible, divert runoff from automobile washing to a grassy surface large enough to contain and allow complete infiltration/percolation into the ground.
- Dispose of excess wash water into the sanitary sewer (i.e., via sink or toilet) or onto a landscaped area that will allow for complete infiltration.
- Conduct engine degreasing at a commercial facility that is set up to handle that type of waste.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

- When possible, use commercial wash facilities.
- Wash vehicles over pervious surfaces such as lawns and gravel areas.
- Choose soaps, cleaners, or detergents labeled “non-toxic,” “phosphate-free,” or “biodegradable.” Vegetable- and citrus-based products are typically safest for the environment.
- Turn off water when not actively washing down vehicle. Use a sprayer with an automatic shut-off.
- If available, use established neighborhood wash areas, where runoff is properly controlled and managed.

For additional information, contact:

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