

Storm Water Pollution Prevention Tips

CAR CARE

Maintenance Tips

- 🔹 **Use an oil change box.** If you change your own oil be careful not to spill it in the street where it could enter the storm drain. Have old rags or other absorbent material handy to pick up the mess in case of a spill.
- 🔹 **Recycle your waste oil** or have your oil changed by a shop that recycles their waste.
- 🔹 **Recycle your antifreeze/coolant** or go to a shop that recycles their coolants. Used coolants should not be flushed down the drain because they contain pollutants that cause problems for sewer treatment plants. Dispose of antifreeze/coolant properly.
- 🔹 **Repair those leaks.** If you find yourself adding fluids frequently or discover spots on your driveway, make repairs right away.
- 🔹 **Clean up leaks or spills promptly.** Use dry absorbent material, like old rags or kitty litter and a broom, to soak up the spill then dispose of it in the trash. Do not wash down the area or allow it to go into the street or storm drain.
- 🔹 **Dispose of used batteries properly.** Return used batteries to the place you bought them or take them to an authorized disposal center.
- 🔹 Do not store used vehicle parts in areas that drain to a storm drain.
- 🔹 To arrange for free auto junking services for your car, call 532-4325 or go to Satellite City Hall. To report abandoned automobiles, call 733-2530.

Washing Tips

- 🔹 **Use a commercial car wash** where wash water is recycled and sent to the wastewater treatment plant.
- 🔹 When washing your car at home, **wash it on grass**, gravel or a pervious surface so water can soak into the ground, not into the storm drain. Otherwise direct as much wash water as you can toward a landscaped area to minimize water from entering the storm drain.



- 🔹 **Use water and soap sparingly.** Wash your car with a bucket, sponge, and nozzle on the end of the hose to conserve water and reduce the pollutants entering the ocean; too many pollutants in the water decreases water quality and can harm aquatic life.



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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is it illegal to wash my car on a City street?

A: No. The City holds a storm water permit that requires implementation of an ordinance to prohibit putting anything down the storm drains containing pollutants such as soapy water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has interpreted the phrase “individual residential car washing” as applying to residents of both single family and multi-family residences. Residential car washing is not a violation as it is specifically excluded from the permit. Because of this, the City is using an educational approach for residential car washing. However, the City is still tasked by EPA to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable, and will do this primarily by educating the public about best management practices to achieve this requirement.

Q: Why is there a problem with car wash water going into storm drains?

A: Water that enters the storm drain goes into pipes and directly into our streams and ultimately to near shore waters. This wash water (and storm water) does NOT go to the wastewater (sewer) treatment plant like water from your sinks and toilets. It is NOT treated before going into our waterways. Car wash water contains pollutants such as soap, oil, grease, heavy metals, and dirt. Excess phosphates in soapy water can decrease water quality and harm aquatic life.

Q: How can my few gallons of soapy water cause damage?

A: One of the biggest contribution to water pollution is storm water. Storm water runs off paved surfaces and collects all the pollutants that accumulates between storms, such as soap, oil, grease, dirt, pet waste, and trash. The accumulation of all the pollutants adds up. By doing our part to prevent pollution, washing our cars carefully, picking up after our pets, being careful with pesticides and fertilizers, we can help minimize and prevent pollution.

Q: What about the big fundraising car washes for schools and youth organizations?

A: Fundraiser car washing activities are prohibited if dirty water discharges to the storm drain. Here are some charity car wash options to assist in preventing pollution:

1. Sell commercial car wash coupons from local car wash companies. This allows you to sell tickets any time of year, expand fundraising beyond one event, and doesn't leave you dependent on the weather.
2. Conduct fundraising events at locations with designated wash areas to:
 - Infiltrate runoff into soil, surface, e.g. gravel, grass, permeable surface
 - Retain/detain runoff, e.g. plug or collect wash water
 - Filter runoff slowly through vegetation, e.g. native plants, trees
 - Pump harmful wash water to the sanitary sewer system. All discharges routed to the sanitary sewer system requires an Industrial Wastewater Discharge Permit; contact 768-3262 or 768-3263.
 - Remember to use water, phosphorous-free soap, sparingly, with a bucket, sponge and nozzle on the end of a hose to conserve water and minimize the amount of phosphates entering storm drains, streams and the ocean.

Q: How do I wash my car to prevent pollution?

A: Wash your car at home and prevent storm water pollution:

- Park your car on grass, gravel or a pervious surface, e.g. grass pavers so water can soak into the ground (infiltrate), not into the storm drains. If the driveway drains to a place where water can infiltrate, that is okay.
- Dump soapy water into the sink or a place water can soak into the ground (infiltrate).
- If you wash your car in a driveway or City street, use water and phosphorous-free soap, sparingly, with a bucket, sponge, and nozzle on the end of the hose, to conserve water and minimize the amount of phosphates entering storm drains, streams and the ocean. Excess phosphates decrease water quality and harm aquatic life.
- If these options are not available, take your car to a commercial car wash where the wash water is recycled and sent to the wastewater plant for treatment.

Q: Is the City going to fine me for washing my car in the driveway?

A: No. The City is taking a public education approach to residential car washing. Over time, we expect to see habits change.



For more Information call the City's Environmental
Concern Line at 768-3300, or visit us online at
www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com.