



## Car Wash Pollution Prevention

Car washes are a common activity for residents and popular way for organizations to hold a fundraising activity such as scout groups, schools, churches and sports teams. Do you know that soapy water from car washes actually causes more damage than good. Water from car washing activities typically contain dirt (sediment), soap (detergent/surfactants), gasoline and motor oil, as well as metals and oil/grease residues from exhaust fumes and brake pads. When the dirty water is allowed to flow down the street into nearby storm drains, it discharges directly into our local creeks and rivers without any treatment.

### ***What happens when water from car washes flows directly into storm drains?***

- ✚ Pollutes creeks, stream, groundwater and Puget Sound.
- ✚ Waterways become unsafe for swimming, drinking and fishing.
- ✚ Soap residues can kill or harm fish and other aquatic life.
- ✚ It costs more to treat.
- ✚ We end up with more chemicals in our drinking water.



### ***Car Wash Best Management Practice***

- ✚ Use a commercial car wash – commercial car wash facilities recycle rinse water or drain into sewer treatment center.
- ✚ Wash your car on gravel, grass or other permeable surface.
- ✚ Block off the storm drain before charity car wash events or use an insert to catch wash water.
- ✚ Pump soapy water onto grass or landscaping to provide filtration.
- ✚ Use hoses with nozzles that automatically turn off when left unattended.
- ✚ Use only biodegradable soaps and use below recommendations.

### ***Alternative to Residential and Fundraising Car Wash Activity***

#### **Residential Car Wash:**

- ✚ Using a professional car wash facility is always the best choice.
- ✚ **Apartments, town homes, condos or single family home** who want to wash their car should avoid parking on drive way or pavements. Instead park your car on lawn or over dirt so the toxic waste can be absorbed and neutralized in soil.

## Fundraising Car Wash

Fundraising car wash organizers should be aware that this type of activity might be violating clean water laws, if soapy water is not properly contained and disposed.

- ✚ Use waterless car wash product, this product is good for small jobs. For more information on how to get it go to <http://www.freedomwaterlesscarwash.com/>
- ✚ Scouts, schools, churches and sport teams planning fund-raisers can actually buy redeemable tickets from Puget Sound Carwash Association (<http://www.charitycarwash.org/>) at low cost and usually resold from \$5:00 - \$8.00 to the public. This ticket can be redeemed at many carwash locations.
- ✚ Car wash kits can be borrowed from King County at 206-684-7988

---

For more information on carwash please call Ruth Famurewa SWM / NPDES Coordinator at 206-870-6968 or email: [rfamurewa@desmoineswa.gov](mailto:rfamurewa@desmoineswa.gov)