

## How can practices in the vehicle maintenance workplace impact local streams and rivers?

Virginia's waterways are a vital source of the clean water used in our daily lives - and are also important for recreational opportunities we want our children and their children to enjoy, such as swimming, fishing, boating and hunting.

Many common car maintenance routines can contribute to pollution of streams and rivers, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. Water runoff from streets, parking lots and driveways picks up oil and grease dripped from cars, asbestos worn from brake linings, zinc from tires and organic compounds and metals from spilled fuels. All of these can pollute drinking water and harm fish and other creatures living in our waterways.

The following practices can go a long way towards keeping local water resources clean.



## Adopt these practices to help prevent pollution.

### Cleaning Auto Parts

Scrape parts with a brush or use a bake oven rather than liquid cleaners.

Arrange drip pans, drying racks, and drain boards so that fluids are directed back into the sink or the fluid holding tank. Use

nontoxic cleaning products on battery heads, cable clamps and chrome; try mixing some baking soda with a mild, biodegradable dishwashing soap to clean wheels and tires.



### Preventing Leaks and Spills

Place drip pans underneath vehicles to capture fluids. Use absorbent cleaning agents instead of

water to clean work areas. Prevent fluid leaks from stored vehicles. Drain fluids such as unused gas, transmission and hydraulic oil, brake and radiator fluid from vehicles or parts kept in storage. Implement simple work practices to reduce the chance of spills. Use a funnel when pouring liquids (like lubricants or motor oil) and place a tray underneath to catch spills. Place drip pans under the spouts of liquid storage containers.



### Proper Disposal of Chemical Waste

Recycle solvents, oil, used oil filters, anti-freeze, batteries, lubricants, and metal filings collected from grinding/polishing auto parts. Contact a chemical waste hauler to dispose of saturated absorbents.



### Proper Storage of Chemical Waste

Many fluids can be recycled by chemical waste disposal companies if they are not mixed. Store all materials under cover or inside to prevent contamination by rainwater.



### Cleaning Up Spills

Use dry methods for spill cleanup (sweeping, absorbent materials, etc.). Clean up even small spills immediately, and make sure an emergency plan is in place for large spills. Post emergency numbers throughout the facility.



### **Metal Polishing and Grinding**

Keep a bin under your lathe or grinder to capture metal filings. Send uncontaminated filings to a scrap metal recycler for reclamation.



### **Washing Vehicles**

Prevent oil and grease, suspended solids and toxins from washing into storm drains:

Designate a washing site where water drains to the sewer system. The area should be paved and well marked as a wash area. Post signs prohibiting oil changes and washing with solvents. All employees should use the designated area.

Wash vehicles with biodegradable, phosphate-free detergent. Use a bucket, or a hose with a nozzle that can be turned off, to wash and rinse vehicles. This conserves water and minimizes urban runoff.



## **The Rivanna Regional Stormwater Education Partnership is:**

# **Vehicle Maintenance & Pollution Prevention**

*Steps you can take to help keep Virginia's waterways healthy and clean.*



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