

Tips for Homeowners: Keeping our Water Clean

Washing & Cleaning Your Vehicle

Automotive fluids, such as oils, greases, and solvents, may contain metals, chlorinated hydrocarbons, and other toxic compounds. Detergents used for automobile washing often contain phosphorus and foaming agents, which degrade the water quality of streams and creeks. Removal of caked dirt and grime from an automobile can also contribute to clogging of the storm drain system. These pollutants can be washed into storm drains and into streams.



What You Can Do:

- 💧 Wash vehicles over pervious surfaces such as lawns and gravel areas. When possible, use commercial wash facilities that recycle their water.
- 💧 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 the water when not actively washing down a vehicle, or use a bucket.
- 💧 Conduct engine degreasing at a commercial facility that is set up to handle that type of waste.
- 💧 If using cleaners (such as acid based wheel cleaners) use a rag to wipe them on and off. Do not rinse them off with water.
- 💧 Shake floor mats into a trashcan or vacuum to clean. Do not shake over the ground.
- 💧 Empty ashtrays into a trashcan.

For more information, visit the RRSEP web site at www.rivanna-stormwater.org.

