

CAR WASHING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

If you think about everything that collects on a car between washes (dust and dirt, brake wear, engine leaks) and everything in car wash water (soaps, chemicals, oils and grease, heavy metals) you realize that a lot of pollutants are being transported to local waterways if that water enters the storm drain.

One car wash by itself will have little impact on the environment, but when you consider all of the car washes happening in Lexington County for fundraisers, and at people's homes, you realize that collectively it has a huge impact. The good news is that there are steps you can take to ensure your next car wash is safe on the environment.

Using a commercial facility is your best option, but here are some simple steps to follow if you wash your vehicle at home.

ENSURE YOUR NEXT CAR WASH IS GOOD TO THE ENVIRONMENT!

IF YOU WASH YOUR OWN CAR

- ✓ Remove all trash and debris from washing area.
- ✓ Use only soaps that are labeled non-toxic, phosphate free, or biodegradable.
- ✓ Whenever possible, wash the car on the grass or gravel so that the water can infiltrate. If this isn't possible, direct the wash water to a grassy area or block off the storm drain with a filter.
- ✓ Avoid the use of acid based wheel cleaners.
- ✓ Use a bucket of soapy water to re-soap rags or sponges throughout the wash rather than adding more soap directly to the rag.
- ✓ Always shut off or kink the hoses when not in use.
- ✓ Do not empty buckets of soapy water into the street or down the storm drain.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Washing your car at home can use 80-140 gallons of water! In comparison, a commercial car wash facility uses 40-45 gal of water per wash.
- Many commercial car washes recycle and reuse the wash water that is generated.
- Most professional car washes save water by using high pressure pumps to clean the car thoroughly while conserving water.
- The presence of soap in waterways at low concentrations can kill fish eggs and at higher concentrations lead to fish kills.
- There are 214, 023 personal vehicles registered in Lexington County. If 40% of those vehicles are washed at home once a month, then well over 82 million gallons of polluted water could potentially enter local waterways!