



When you're washing your car in the driveway, you're not just washing your car in the driveway.

Clean water is important to all of us. It's up to all of us to make it happen. In recent years sources of water pollution like industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced. Now, most water pollution comes from things like cars leaking oil, fertilizers from farms and gardens and failing septic tanks. All these sources add up to a big pollution problem. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water too. And that adds up to a pollution solution!

Why do we need clean water?

Having clean water is of primary importance for our health and economy. Clean water provides recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, drinking water and adds beauty to our landscape. All of us benefit from clean water and all of us have a role in getting and keeping our lakes, rivers, marine and ground waters clean.

What's the problem with car washing?

There's no problem with washing your car. It's just how and where you do it. Most soap contains phosphates and other chemicals that harm fish and water quality. If you live in the city and you wash your car in the driveway, the soap, together with the dirt and oil washed from your car, flows into nearby storm drains which run directly into lakes, rivers or marine waters. The phosphates from the soap can cause excess algae to grow. Algae look bad, smell bad, and harm water quality. As algae decay, the process uses up oxygen in the water that fish need.

How will we change our ways?

Use sensible ways to wash your cars and keep soapy water from washing into storm drains. You can, indeed, wash your car and you can also keep our waters clean!

Car washing soaps don't have to be a problem.

Use a commercial car wash, either self-serve, machine wash or valet.

Charity Car Washes

- Sell commercial car wash coupons instead
- Rent a "Bay for a Day" at a self-serve car wash

Don't feed soap to the storm drain. Wash your car right. Keep your waters clean.

We all need clean water.

We drink it, fish in it, play in it. We enjoy all it adds to our lives. In fact, we need it to survive. Fish and wildlife do, too.

More than 60 percent of water pollution comes from things like cars leaking oil, fertilizers and pesticides from farms and gardens, failing septic tanks, pet waste and fuel spills from recreational boaters.

All these small, dispersed sources add up to a big pollution problem. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our waters too—and that adds up to a pollution solution!

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