

## Car Care



Washing a car can degrade water quality if the dirty, soapy rinse water enters a storm drain or runs off into a stream. Wash and rinse water usually contain pollutants such as soap, oils and grease, suspended solids, heavy metals, and toxics.

Used motor oil is also bad news for surface water and should be disposed of properly. **One gallon of used motor oil can make one million gallons of water undrinkable!** Even small amounts of motor oil can threaten fish, water birds, insects, and plant life.

- Instead of washing your car at home, take it to a commercial car wash. The drains in commercial car washes are connected to the sanitary sewer system, so rinse water doesn't wash down storm drains. **Many commercial car washes conserve water by recycling rinse water.**
- If you must wash your car at home, use a mild dishwashing liquid and try to keep the soapy water from flowing to a storm drain. Park your car on grass or vegetation that will absorb the water, and use a spray nozzle that shuts off.
- If you're holding a carwash event for fundraising, **make sure that the site has a drain that is hooked up to the sanitary sewer or check out a car wash kit from the city.** Otherwise, the soapy, dirty water will flow down the nearest storm drain and eventually enter a stream. Some service stations in Bellevue have the city's car wash kit on site. Call Bellevue Utilities at 425-452-6166 for more information.
- Check with commercial car washes about fundraising. Some of them will let you sell tickets for car washes at their site and will share the proceeds. Most likely, you'll be able to sell several tickets to each buyer, the fundraisers won't have to work all day, and you'll know that rinse water will be recycled and later go to the sanitary sewer system.
- Tell the lube shop that changes your car's oil to make sure the oil cap is screwed on tight to avoid dripping oil onto streets later.
- Watch for leaky valve cover gaskets and engine seals. Replace them as soon as possible.
- Avoid overfilling your gas tank.
- **Never pour used oil or antifreeze down or near a storm drain or onto the ground.** If you change your own oil, get a reusable used oil container. Drain the oil carefully into the container, avoiding splatter and spills. Seal the container securely and take it to your nearest used oil collection site. Remember that many local businesses collect oil.
- Buy re-refined oil if you change your own oil. Ask for it at lube shops when you have your oil changed. Re-refined oil is used motor oil that has been remanufactured into new oil. The API logo ensures that it meets the same rigorous national standards as virgin oil.