

Car Care for Clean Water

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

- ◆ The stuff we wash off our cars contains major water pollutants like oil, grease and heavy metals.
- ◆ If the water runs off paved surfaces such as your driveway it will get into our streams and rivers.
- ◆ Detergents contain surfactants.



WHAT CAN I DO?

- ◆ Wash your car in the grass. Grass can absorb the water and filter the detergents and surfactants, preventing them from running into storm drains.
- ◆ Use biodegradable soap. It is better for your car and the environment!
- ◆ Wash your car at a commercial car wash, which treats and recycles the water.



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 Protecting water quality through outreach, education & public participation since 2004.
 

Stormwater SMART Member Governments:
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Car Care for Clean Water

SURFACTANTS

- ◆ Detergents contain surfactants, which remove the residue from soap and other products, leaving it squeaky clean.
- ◆ Surfactants can wash the protective slime off fish. Fish rely on this slime to protect themselves from bacterial and parasites. It also prevents the fish from absorbing harmful pollutants.
- ◆ Wash Your Car in the Grass to keep surfactants out of the water.



HEAVY METALS

Every time we touch the brakes to slow down, there are tiny pieces of metal that come off the brakes. Over time this wear causes us to need new brakes. The metal from our brakes is toxic to consume. As the car is washed the metal from brakes and other areas gets carried off in the wash water runoff. If the water flows across the concrete driveway or road it can pick up even more heavy metals. To keep this metal from entering the storm drain or the stream, wash the car in the grass or commercial car wash.



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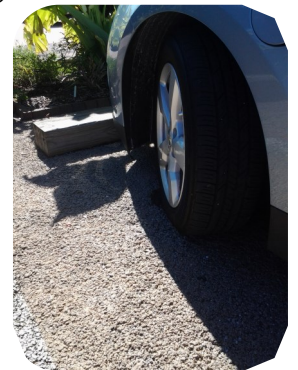
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Kernersville, NC 27284
(336) 904-0300
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