

CAR WASHING

Applicability

Car washing is a common routine for residents and a popular way for organizations such as scout troops, schools, and sports teams to raise funds. This activity is not limited by geographic region, but its impact on water quality will be greatest in more urban areas with higher concentrations of automobiles.

Currently, only a few pollution prevention programs incorporate proper car washing practices as part of an overall message to residents on ways to reduce nonpoint source pollution. Other programs have extended this message to include charity car washes and provide these charity groups with equipment and training to alleviate the problems associated with polluted wash water entering the storm drain system.

Implementation

The development of a prevention program to reduce the impact of car wash runoff includes outreach on management practices to reduce discharges to storm drains. Some of these management practices include:

- Using a commercial car wash.
- Washing your car on gravel, grass or other permeable surfaces.
- Blocking off the storm drain during charity car wash events or using a insert to catch wash water.
- Pumping soapy water from car washes into a sanitary sewer drain.
- If pumping into a drain is not feasible, pumping car wash water onto grass or landscaping to provide filtration.
- Using hoses with nozzles that automatically turn off when left unattended.
- Using only biodegradable soaps.