

# WHEN YOU'RE WASHING YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY, REMEMBER YOU'RE NOT JUST WASHING YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY



All the soap, scum and oily grit from your car runs along the curb, then into the storm drain and directly into our rivers, bays and bayous. That causes pollution that is unhealthy for aquatic life. So how do you avoid this whole mess? It is easy. Wash your car on the grass or gravel instead of on the street or driveway. Or better yet, take it to the car wash where the water gets treated and recycled.



A cooperative effort of the **Alabama Clean Water Partnerships.**

# 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, more than 60 percent of 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. Each of us can do small things to help clean up our water and that adds up to a pollution solution!

## Why do we need clean water?

Clean water is important to our health and economy. Clean water provides recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, drinking water, and adds beauty to our landscape. We all benefit from clean water and each of us play an important role in getting and keeping our surface and ground waters clean.

## What's the problem with Car Washing?

There is no problem with washing your car depending on how and when you do it. Many soaps contain phosphates and most car-care products contain chemicals that may harm fish and degrade water quality. The soap, together with the dirt and oil washed from your car, flows into nearby storm drains which empty directly into lakes, rivers or marine waters. The phosphates from the soap can cause excess algae to grow. Algae sometimes looks or smells bad, and may be harmful to water quality. As algae decays, the process uses up oxygen in the water that fish need to survive.

**Place Your Logo Information Here**



Office of Education and Outreach  
(334) 394-4360

Municipal Storm Water Program  
(334) 271-4367



Thanks to the Washington Department of Ecology, King County, and the cities of Bellevue, Seattle, and Tacoma.

## Clean Water tip:

*How can you wash your car and help keep our waters clean?*

Use soap sparingly. Use a hose nozzle with a trigger to save water.

Pour your bucket of soapy water down the sink when you're done, not in the street.

Wash your car on a grassy area so the ground can filter the water naturally.

Best of all, take your car to a commercial car wash, especially if you plan to clean the engine or the bottom of your car. Most car washes reuse water several times before sending it to the wastewater facility for treatment.

To find out more about the impacts from washing your vehicle and what you can do to prevent water pollution, call the number listed here.

