

Car Washing 101

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



When you're washing your car in the driveway, you're not just washing your car in the driveway. Everything that goes into our storm drains runs directly into our streams, lakes, rivers, and Puget Sound – untreated. Vehicle wash water contains pollutants like oil, grease, heavy metals, solvents and soaps. So when you wash your car in your driveway, all that harmful stuff goes down the storm drain and pollutes our waters. Even biodegradable soap pollutes!

Not-so-fun facts

- Over two million gallons of contaminated car wash water flows into our streams each year.
- Phosphates from car washing soap cause excess algae to grow in our waters. When algae decays, it uses up the oxygen in the water that fish need to survive.

Car washing doesn't HAVE TO BE A problem

You have options. What will you do to help?

- Use a commercial car wash
- Use a waterless car washing product
- Wash on a lawn or gravel so the water can seep into the ground
- Divert your water away from the storm drain



Learn more

Visit bothellwa.gov/carwashing and pugetsoundstartshere.org for more ways to help keep Puget Sound healthy.



City of Bothell™

ADDED BENEFITS

Cleaning your car the right way also helps you

- Support a healthy watershed
- Help restore salmon runs
- Set a good example for children and neighbors