

Other Ways to Wash Your Car and Keep Edmonds Clean and Green

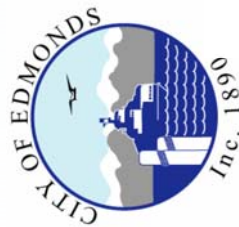
- Use a shut-off nozzle on your hose to conserve water.
- Choose a soap that is biodegradable, has little or no phosphates, and contains no chlorine, bleach, nitrates, or ammonia.
- Avoid labels with Caution, Danger or Warning.
- Use a small amount of soap. You don't need 7 inch deep suds!

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Clean & Green Car Wash Program



**Puget Sound
Starts Here**



WASHING YOUR CAR??

**How to keep your local
waters healthy and clean**



For many of us, washing our car or truck is as American as baseball and apple pie. It's hard to imagine that there is a connection between keeping your car clean and keeping our streams, lakes, and marine waters clean and healthy. It's harder still to believe that one person washing their car can really cause any harm. However, thousands of people washing their cars can be a serious problem.

WHERE DOES THE SOAPY WATER AND RINSE WATER GO?

Car washwater and rinse water contain a mixture of detergents, oils, heavy metals and other pollutants that we wash off from our vehicles. If this polluted washwater flows along the street it can now enter a storm drain that flows to our local Edmonds watersheds, which eventually drain into Puget Sound. This soapy, polluted water is largely untreated and can kill aquatic plants and animals.

WHAT IS A STORM DRAIN?

A storm drain is the entrance to a system of underground pipes that collects and carries water from streets and parking lots, and discharges it untreated into lakes, streams, wetlands and Puget Sound.



IS CAR WASHING ILLEGAL?

No! Washing your vehicle is **not** illegal.

But...discharge of anything other than clean stormwater runoff into the storm drains is technically illegal, per Edmonds Community Development Code Chapter 7.200.

The City of Edmonds has adopted an educational approach, rather than an immediate enforcement approach in dealing with residential car washing. If you want to learn more, contact information can be found on the back of this brochure as well as the website for the [Department of Ecology](https://ecology.wa.gov) for additional information. <https://ecology.wa.gov>



SOME NOTES ON SOAPS

All soaps, including biodegradable ones, can harm our waterways. Soaps break the surface tension of water, lowering the oxygen level which is harmful to fish and other aquatic life. The worst soaps contain phosphates. This particular nutrient can cause unwanted algae blooms in surface waters, and nobody wants their favorite swimming lake closed! Also, don't forget...when your washwater leaves your car it travels into our watersheds as a mixture of soap, oils, heavy metals, organics and sediment. These pollutants can be very toxic as we often ingest the same pollutants our fish and shellfish also have eaten.

SO WHAT SHOULD I DO TO KEEP OUR WATERS CLEAN?

- When washing your car at home, wash it on the lawn (or other vegetated areas) to keep the water out of the storm drains. Mild, soapy water won't hurt your lawn; it will actually water it!
- Wash your car on an area that drains to your lawn or a vegetated area.
- Use waterless car wash products, available at auto parts stores, supermarkets, and online.
- Take your car to a commercial car wash facility that discharges its water to the sewer system. Washwater that drains here gets treated and/or recycled.
- Find a community car wash that uses a car wash kit and disposes of the washwater to the sewer system.

Did you know using a hose and bucket at home to wash your vehicle can use between 80-140 gallons of water per wash?

