

SIMPLE STEPS TO CLEANER WATER

1. Recycle Oil

Old motor oil can be reprocessed and used again and again. Just put it in a container with a tight lid such as a plastic jug or metal can, and take it to a community oil recycling center. Don't pour anything else in with the oil because contaminated oil cannot be recycled.

Recycling is the only safe way to get rid of used motor oil. Never use old oil to kill weeds or to oil roads. Oil poured down the storm drain ends up in our lakes and streams. The five quarts from your car could create an oil slick the size of two football fields or pollute a million gallons of drinking water.

2. Use Commercial Car Washes

Taking your car to a commercial car wash or spray booth is a good way to protect our lakes and streams. The dirty water from the car wash goes to a wastewater treatment plant where pollutants are removed.

If you wash cars on a paved driveway or parking lot, the dirty water ends up in our lakes and streams. In addition, phosphates in the soap you use act like fertilizer. Weeds and algae decompose and use up oxygen needed by fish. If you want to wash your car at home, drive it onto the lawn or a gravel drive where the water will soak into the ground. The soil will filter out most pollutants.

Thinking of having a car wash to raise money for charity? Team up with a commercial car wash and sell car wash tickets for an environmentally-friendly fund raiser.

3. Keep Your Car Tuned Up

Cars that run smoothly burn less fuel and causes less pollution. A tuned-up car saves you money by using up to 20% less gasoline. Regular tune-ups also reduce the amount of hydrocarbons, nitrous oxides and other pollutants that come out of your car's exhaust pipe. These chemicals pollute our water as well as our air. Hydrocarbons can cause cancer and nitrous oxide is one of the ingredients in acid rain. Acid rain increases the toxicity of other pollutants in street runoff, which adds to the risk of sickness or death for fish and other aquatic life.

4. Repair Leaks

Spots on your driveway or garage floor mean the engine, transmission or radiator in your car is leaking. Have the leak repaired right away. Then clean up the spot by using cat litter or another absorbent material to soak up the spill. Sweep up the cat litter and put it in a sealed bag in the trash for disposal. Do not scrub the spot with detergent and wash the dirty water into the street. Remember, all that dirty water ends up in lakes and streams.

5. Recycle Antifreeze

Recycling antifreeze can be a challenge. A few recycling sites now have separate tanks for antifreeze collection. Check with your local gas station or auto repair shop – they may accept used antifreeze.

Used antifreeze should not be flushed down the drain because it has pollutants that may cause problems for sewage treatment plants or septic tanks.

Antifreeze is very poisonous to people and animals. Because of its sweet taste and smell, antifreeze may attract children or pets and other animals. Drinking only three ounces may kill an adult and even less will kill children or pets.

Anything dumped into a storm drain flows directly to a nearby stream or lake.

