

Car Washing



Wash water from car washing activities typically contains dirt (sediment), soap (detergent/surfactants), gasoline and motor oil, as well as metals and oil/grease residues from exhaust fumes and brake pads. When this dirty water is allowed to flow into storm drains, it travels directly to our local creeks and rivers without treatment. This pollution can kill or harm fish and other aquatic life and make our waterways unsafe for drinking, swimming and fishing. Alone, one car wash fundraiser event may not create a significant adverse environmental impact. But, collectively, car wash fundraiser events can contribute large amounts of polluted wash water to our local waterways.

Did you know that commercial car washes in the City of Lake Oswego are not allowed to discharge wash water to the storm drain system? They must either recycle the water or discharge it to the sanitary sewer system, which in turn will deliver the polluted water to a wastewater treatment plant to be cleaned before it enters Oswego Lake, Tryon Creek, the Willamette, and Tualatin Rivers.

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