

Automotive service facilities include car washes, parking garages, rental agencies, gasoline stations, automobile service and repair shops, public transportation and emergency response vehicle storage/ service areas, fleet storage/ service facilities, auto body shops, and parts suppliers.

Thousands of vehicles pass over Cambridge streets every day. Their occupants rely on businesses like yours to keep their vehicles operating safely and dependably. The Charles River and Alewife Brook also rely on you to help keep them free of pollutants.

The Charles River and Alewife Brook are valuable natural resources in Cambridge. They attract students, researchers, tourists, industries, and business to the City. The Charles River and Alewife Brook are centers for recreational activities, such as boating and fishing. They are also refuges for wildlife and must be protected from pollutants. When it rains, stormwater runoff from parking lots and roads discharges directly into nearby water bodies.



The problem

Routine maintenance activities performed in automotive service facilities can result in spills or leaks of materials, including metals and automotive fluids, to the garage floor or parking lot. Sometimes, vehicles dropped off overnight to be repaired may deposit fluids in your parking lot.

When it rains, these materials are washed into the stormwater drainage system and are discharged into nearby water bodies. Metals and automotive fluids are harmful to the environment, and should be prevented from entering catch basins or drains.

What you can do

Prevent Spills -

- Always keep drip pans underneath vehicles that are being repaired.
- Store liquids and hazardous materials away from drains and catch basins in clearly labeled containers.
- Have a spill control plan ready in case of spills. Keep spill control kits and supplies clearly labeled in the work area. Clean up spills immediately.
- Use safety containers when transferring liquids to prevent spills or drips. Keep extra containers on hand.
- Seal-coat concrete garage floors in the areas where vehicles will be repaired. Seal coating makes it easier to clean up spills or leaks.
- Identify locations of floor drains and catch basins and know where they discharge. Floor drains should be connected to the SANITARY SEWER system. Catch basins should be connected to the STORMWATER drainage system. Your plumber or the DPW can help identify the discharge locations.



Use an oil/water separator -

- Know what an oil/water separator is and how it works. Have it inspected and cleaned regularly by a qualified technician.
- Know where it is and what drains go into it. Seal off floor drains that are not connected to it.



Maintain catch basins and drains -

- Empty wastewater into a utility sink and never into a catch basin.
- Develop a schedule for inspecting and cleaning catch basins and drains on your property.
- Clean up spills on outside surfaces with an absorbent material instead of using a hose.



Inspect and train -

- Check the garage and premises regularly for signs of spills, leaks, unsecured containers, or open drains.
- Make sure your staff is aware of proper procedures for handling automotive fluids and preventing releases into drains.
- Drain used oil filters into an oil collection container before discarding.



Recycle -

- Recyclable materials include used oil, cardboard, metals, and tires. New uses are being developed every day for recycled materials.
- Recycling can save money for your business by reducing the costs for refuse collection, and hazardous material disposal.
- If you wash vehicles at your facility, consider installing a water re-use system.





Remember -

- ✓ A single quart of motor oil can contaminate up to two million gallons of drinking water.
- ✓ A gallon of oil can create an eight-acre oil slick.



**PROTECTING OUR WATERBODIES FROM
AUTOMOTIVE RUNOFF**



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact the DPW

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**HOW AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE FACILITY EMPLOYEES
CAN PROTECT THE CHARLES RIVER AND ALEWIFE
BROOK**

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