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## Vehicle Maintenance and Car Washing

Simple steps you take when caring for your car can do a lot to help the environment...



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147 Hampshire Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
617.349.4800 / TTY 617.349.4805  
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Water washing over the land, whether from rain, snow melt, car washing or the watering of lawns and gardens, picks up an array of contaminants including oils, metals, and bacteria. This runoff finds its way into the Charles River of the Little River/Alewife Brook either directly or through the stormwater drain system. The Environmental Protection Agency has determined that pollution from stormwater runoff is the single largest cause of our nation's water quality problems. Everyday personal actions you take can have a significant impact on the water quality in our rivers.

The City of Cambridge Department of Public Works sponsors Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days. Contact DPW at **617.349.4800** for the date of the next collection day. If you witness illegal dumping of waste materials into catch basins, call DPW immediately – and confidentially – at **617.349.4800**.



■ For more information on used oil recycling, contact the DPW Recycling Program at **617.349.4800** or visit [www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~TheWorks](http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~TheWorks)

## Did You Know?

- Many car care products contain toxic chemicals that can contaminate surface and groundwater resources.
- Motor oil, antifreeze, battery acid, gasoline, car waxes, degreasers, radiator flushes, and rust preventatives can all contribute to contamination, and pose direct threats to fish and other aquatic species.
- 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.
- Contaminates in stormwater runoff can impact fishing and swimming conditions.
- Cars can pollute indirectly through emissions-borne metals and other pollutants.

## What You Can Do

- When changing fluids from your car, drain into a clean and unbreakable container, seal it and label it. Take the fluids to a hazardous waste collection site.
  - Never pour any chemicals or hazardous substances from cars down catch basin (stormwater drains), on the ground, or leave in driveways or parking lots.
  - Recycle used oil by returning it to the point of purchase with your receipt. The law (MGL Ch 21 S. 52A) requires retailers to accept it and recycle at no cost to you.
  - Quickly contain and clean up spills. Do not wash it away with a hose.
- Check your car regularly for leaks.
- Car pooling, public transportation, walking or using a bicycle for transportation helps reduce all kinds of car emissions-borne pollutants.
- Don't "top off" when fueling your car.
- Use a car wash to clean cars. They're connected to the sanitary sewer system, and often conserve water by recycling rinse water.
- If you wash your own car, use a shutoff nozzle on your hose, use detergent and water sparingly, use non-phosphate, biodegradable detergents, and wash on a pervious surface area that will absorb the water (such as grass) whenever possible.