



City of Valdosta
Engineering Department
Stormwater Division

**STORMWATER TIPS FOR WASHING VEHICLES AT HOME
 AND COMMUNITY/CHARITY CAR WASHES**

For many who own or operate a vehicle, there is nothing quite like having a clean boat, car, or truck. The conveniences of washing them at home or at a community/charity car wash can include, enjoying the outdoors, taking your time, helping a good cause, and the relatively low cost. However, as simple as washing a vehicle may seem, there are a few things to consider so that you can protect both your vehicle and our environment.

HOW CAN WASHING YOUR VEHICLE AT HOME IMPACT OUR ENVIRONMENT?

In many cases, people tend to wash their vehicles on driveways or in parking lots, which tends to be constructed of a hard surface such as concrete or asphalt. This can be a problem because the hard surface will not allow pollutants such as dirt, oil/grease, and soapy water to soak into it. Instead, the pollutants may flow to the nearest storm drain, which are then discharged into local streams and ponds untreated.

If you choose to wash your vehicle at home or community/charity event instead of at a commercial car wash, which captures the polluted water and treats it at the wastewater treatment plant, here are some important tips to remember that will help protect our environment and reduce stormwater pollution:

Do Not	Do
Do not wash your vehicle(s) on a hard surface such as concrete or asphalt	Do wash your vehicle(s) on surfaces that allow water to soak into the ground such as grass or gravel
Do not use household cleaning products on the paint such as hand soap, dishwashing detergent, or glass cleaner	Do use biodegradable ¹ products or waterless car wash products. Also be sure to read the warning label
Do not use a hose that continually runs while you are washing your vehicle	Do use a hose equipped with an automatic shutoff nozzle

¹—Even biodegradable products can be toxic to fish, other aquatic life, and degrade water quality.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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