



CAR CARE FOR DO-IT-YOURSELFERS



Each year in the U.S. an estimated 180 million gallons of used oil are disposed of improperly - dripped, spilled, or poured onto the ground, directly into waterways, or down storm drains. That's sixteen times the amount spilled by the *Exxon Valdez*! Recent studies show that as brake pads wear, they contribute up to 40% of the copper that enters waterways through storm drains. Smoking vehicles - just 10% of the cars on the road - cause 50% of our air pollution. And since what goes up must come down, air pollution causes water pollution as well. A car that isn't tuned properly produces 10-15 times more pollution than a well-running vehicle. Running your air conditioner for 5-10 minutes each week in the winter helps to prevent your seals from leaking and causing air pollution. You can help!

Your Work Area

- When you're working on your car, remember that any drips or spills left in a street or driveway can flow to a storm drain and on to the Bay!
- DO choose a work area that is easy to clean up, with an impervious floor if possible.
- DO use plastic tarps and drip pans when your car is leaking, and when you're working on it. Fix leaks as soon as possible!
- DO use sawdust or cat litter for spills. Sweep it up, bag it, and put it in the trash. For large spills, use a squeegee and dust pan first.
- DON'T hose down your work area!

Cleaning Your Car

- Rinse water from car washing or brake or engine cleaning can harm wildlife if it enters a storm drain.
- DO use a commercial car wash that recycles water or discharges it directly to the sewer for treatment.
- DO wash your car on a lawn, gravel driveway, or area where soapy water will not run into a street or storm drain.
- DO use soap sparingly if you must wash your car at home - even biodegradable soap is toxic to wildlife.
- DO pour your bucket of soapy water down the sink when you're done.
- DO use paper towels to wipe brake dust off of wheels before washing.
- DON'T use spray-on wheel cleaners - or rinse them off - where rinse water might flow to a street or storm drain.

Brake Work

- Most brake pads (part of disc brakes, generally on the front wheels) contain copper, which wears off as the pads wear, and contributes significant amounts of toxic stormwater pollution to our creeks and Bay.
- DO clean brake dust off of wheels with paper towels and dispose of towels in the trash.
- DO ask your auto parts supplier about no-copper or low-copper brake pads for your car.
- DON'T clean wheels, brakes, or brake pads where brake pad dust, cleaners, or rinse water can flow to a street or storm drain.

Engine Cleaning and Degreasing

- Many degreasers contain highly toxic solvents that are dangerous to work with and harmful to the environment.
- DO read labels carefully before you buy. Avoid products containing: Trichloroethane or trichloroethylene; Naphtha; and Nonylphenol ethoxylate
- DO use rags instead of water when you're cleaning.
- DO use non-flammable, more biodegradable alternatives to highly toxic degreasers. Try limonene, a citrus-based solvent. Put any rinse water down a sink or toilet - never into a storm drain.
- DON'T clean your engine at home unless you can contain and properly dispose of the rinse water - a hazardous waste. Instead, take your engine, or parts, to a local parts store that offers a cleaning service or to a shop that collects and treats engine wastewater.

Changing Oil, Antifreeze and Other Fluids

- Proper use and disposal of auto fluids is an easy way to prevent stormwater pollution and protect our creeks and Bay.
- DO drain fluid into a drain pan. Use a funnel to pour fluid into a plastic container.
- DO recycle used oil.
- DO recycle your old oil filter. Poke holes in it and let it drain into your oil pan for several hours first.
- DO dispose of radiator fluid properly. Don't flush your radiator where fluids may flow into a street, gutter, or storm drain.
- DON'T drain or pour any auto fluid onto the street or into a storm drain.
- DON'T mix coolant with other auto fluids. They are not recyclable when mixed.

Things you can do to help stop pollution caused by cars...

- Drive less! Walk or ride a bike whenever you can. Consolidate trips. Ride the bus or train. Carpool with a friend.
- Watch for leaks from your car and repair them promptly.
- Recycle used oil and oil filters.
- Exchange your old car battery where you buy a new one or take it to a recycling center or household hazardous waste collection site/event.
- If you see someone pouring used auto fluids into the street, gutter, or storm drain, call the Public Works Department immediately. Pouring any substance into the storm drain is illegal!
- When your auto air conditioner requires service, find out if it can be retrofitted to accept a non-ozone depleting agent.

Remember to clean up all spills when they happen! If building materials or other wastes get into a gutter, storm drain, or creek call Stormwater Hotline at (580) 581-3565.