

# CAR WASH GUIDELINES

## To Learn More

Visit us at: [co.st-clair.il.us/stormwater](http://co.st-clair.il.us/stormwater)

Or

Call us at 618-825-2531

### OVERVIEW

Washing your car at home or at a local a fundraiser can wreak havoc on nearby bodies of water, simply by sending pollutants like dirt, soap, oil, grease and metals, along with the wash water, into streams and river. Ideally, waste water from car washes should be emptied into a sanitary sewer (the system that transports wastewater to a treatment facility) if allowed by local jurisdiction.

The following suggestions are some other ways to make your car washes friendly to our local waterways.

**REMEMBER: Only rain goes down the storm drain!**

### AT HOME:

- Pull your car onto the lawn before washing. You can water your lawn at the same time you wash your car.
- Use phosphate-free, biodegradable cleaning products.
- Avoid using degreasers, solvents and tire cleaning products.
- Wring out sponges and rags in a bucket, then empty the bucket into the sanitary sewer system, via sinks or toilets. You can also empty the bucket onto pervious landscaped areas where wastewater can be absorbed.
- Use a low-flow nozzle for your hose and turn it off when you're not using the water.
- Sweep up any debris (rather than hosing it to the street) and dispose of it in the garbage.
- If possible, take your car to a commercial car wash. These facilities use technology to achieve minimal water usage and discharge their water in a regulated and safe manner. Some car washes reuse water and even employ environmentally friendly soaps!
- **Bonus Tip:** Ensure you're regularly changing your oil to prevent excessive oil leakage.

### AT A FUNDRAISER:

- Follow guidelines in the "At Home" section.
- Use a car wash kit to prevent soapy, dirty water from entering the storm sewer.
- Hold the event at commercial car wash. The increased traffic can benefit both the fundraiser and the commercial car wash!
- Sell tickets to a commercial car wash, where soapy water is disposed in a safe manner.
- Use earth-friendly cleaning products.
- Make use of a pressure washer. This will get the job done, but use less water.
- Follow the *Just Enough* principle. Use just enough soap and water needed to get the job done. Even if the soap is biodegradable, it can still have an effect on fish and invertebrates in our rivers. Less soap also means more of a profit for the charity!





HELP YOUR WATERSHED!

## “Send Only Rain Down the Drain!”

In order to protect the water quality of local streams, car wash kits or other protection measures should be used when holding a car wash event.



# ST. CLAIR COUNTY

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

## St. Clair County Stormwater Management

For more information

St. Clair County  
Building and Zoning Department  
10 Public Square  
Belleville, IL 62220

Stormwater Hotline  
618-825-2690

Email: [stormwater@co.st-clair.il.us](mailto:stormwater@co.st-clair.il.us)



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