



Good Housekeeping

1. Automobile Washing

Many residents wash their cars in the driveway or on the street. Wash waters typically flow to a storm drain or ditch, which discharges stormwater directly to the underlying groundwater or to the nearest stream, lake, or Puget Sound. Soaps and detergents, even the biodegradable ones, can have immediate and long-term effects on aquatic life in water bodies. The grime washed off the car also contains a variety of pollutants that can harm fish and wildlife.

Suggested BMPs

At Home:

- Wash your car on your lawn. This allows the water and soap to soak into the ground instead of running off into a local water body.
- Select soaps without phosphates. They are less harmful to the environment.
- Use a hose nozzle with a shut-off valve to save water.
- Do not wash your car if rain is expected.
- Pour the bucket of soapy, dirty wash water down your sink. This way the water does not pollute surface water. Instead, it is treated at the wastewater treatment plant or by your septic system.

Away from Home:

- Consider not washing your car at home. Take it to a commercial car wash that has a recycle system and discharges wastewater to the sanitary sewer for treatment.

2. Automobile Maintenance

Many of us are “weekend mechanics”. We enjoy the cost savings of changing our own oil and antifreeze, topping off the battery with water, and generally making our car perform its best. There is a lot of potential for stormwater pollution associated with these activities; however, the following BMPs will help you minimize pollution while servicing your car, truck, van, or RV.

Required BMPs

- Recycle all oils, antifreeze, solvents, and batteries.
- Never dump new or used automotive fluids or solvents on the ground, in a storm drain or street gutter, or in a water body.
- Do not mix wastes. The chlorinated solvents in some carburetor cleaners can contaminate a huge tank of used oil, rendering it unsuitable for recycling. Always keep your wastes in separate containers that are properly labeled and store them out of the weather.

Suggested BMPs

- Fix all leaks, to keep the leaky material off streets and out of surface water.
- To dispose of oil filters, punch a hole in the top and let drain for 24 hours. After draining, wrap in two layers of plastic and dispose of in your regular garbage.
- Use care in draining and collecting antifreeze to prevent accidental spills. Spilled antifreeze tastes sweet and can be deadly to animals they ingest it.
- Perform your service activities on concrete or asphalt or over a plastic tarp to make spill cleanup easier. Keep a bag of kitty litter on hand to absorb spills. If there is a spill, sprinkle a good layer on the spill, let it absorb, then sweep it up and dispose of it in the garbage.
- If you are doing body work outside, be sure to use a tarp to catch material resulting from grinding, sanding, and painting. Dispose of this waste by double bagging in plastic and placing in your garbage.

3. Storage of Solid Wastes and Food Wastes

Improper storage of food and solid waste at residences can lead to not only water pollution problems, but problems with neighborhood pets and vermin as well. Following the BMPs listed below can help keep your property a clean and healthy place to live.

Suggested BMPs

- Recycle as much as you can. City of Centralia residents have access to curbside pickup for yard waste and recyclable materials. Also, look under “recycling” in the phone book for firms that take other recyclables.
- All waste containers kept outside should have lids. Leaking waste containers should be replaced. If your container is damaged, please call your local solid waste hauler.
- Store waste containers under cover if possible, or on grassy areas.
- Inspect the storage area regularly to pick up loose scraps of material and dispose of them properly.

4. Pet Waste Management

Pet waste that washes into lakes, streams or rivers begins to decay, using up oxygen and releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia combined with warm water can kill fish. Pet waste also contains nutrients that encourage weed and algae growth. It can also carry diseases that could make water unsafe for contact and lead to beach closures or affect shellfish harvest.

Cleaning up after your pet can be as simple as taking a plastic bag or pooper-scooper along on your next walk. Then choose one of the following.

Suggested BMPs

- **Bag it** – Put waste in a securely closed bag and deposit it in the trash. Do not put it in your yard waste container.
- **Bury it** – Bury waste at least 1 foot deep in your yard or garden (not in food-growing areas).
- **Flush it** – Only flush pet wastes if your home is served by a sanitary sewer which goes to a sewage treatment plant. Water from your toilet goes through a treatment process that removes pollutants before it is discharged into the environment. To prevent plumbing problems, don’t flush debris or cat litter. To prevent premature failure or excessive maintenance costs do not flush pet wastes to your septic system.
- **Compost it** – waste from small animals **other than dogs and cats** (rabbits, rodents, etc.), can be put in your compost bin.