

# WASHING YOUR VEHICLE



## WHAT IS A WATERSHED & WHY IS STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

A watershed is the land area that drains stormwater into streams, rivers, or other bodies of water. The storm drain system consists of a network of gutters, pipes, and open channels designed to manage flooding by directing untreated stormwater away from our communities. The untreated stormwater can be harmful to our local environment and aquatic life.

## HOW DOES CAR WASHING AFFECT THE WATERSHED?

Disposing of detergents and soapy water into streets and gutters can carry harmful pollutants into the storm drain and harm our environment, even if it's labeled nontoxic or biodegradable.

## COMMERCIAL CAR WASH

When possible, take your car to a self or full service commercial car wash. These facilities are designed to re-use water whenever possible and discharge any wastewater into the sanitary sewer, where it is treated before being discharged to the environment.

## INDIVIDUALS WASHING AT HOME

### Wash on Pervious Surfaces

If possible wash on an area that absorbs water, such as gravel, or grass. This can filter water before it enters groundwater, storm drains, or creeks.

### Use Environmentally Friendly Products

Opt for biodegradable, phosphate-free soaps and detergents, and non-toxic cleaning agents to reduce chemical runoff. Never use engine degreasers or toxic wheel cleaners.

### Conserve Water

Use a hose with a shut-off nozzle to control water flow. Use low volume pressure washers to also minimize the amount of water used.

