



# Watershed Protection Tips for Car Owners

## The Watershed Should Only Shed Water

The storm drain system is a vast network of gutters, pipes and open channels designed for flood control, which directs runoff – untreated – from the watershed straight into the waterways.

Polluted stormwater contaminate streams, rivers and lakes. It can kill or damage plants, fish and wildlife, and can degrade the quality of our water.

The Community for a Clean Watershed program was established to protect Ventura County's watershed by preventing stormwater pollution.

For more information on how to keep our watersheds clean, go to [cleanwatershed.org](http://cleanwatershed.org).



## What Is Our Watershed?

Our watershed is the total land area, including your yard, from which stormwater drains into streams, rivers or other bodies of water. In Ventura County our primary watersheds drain into the Ventura and Santa Clara Rivers, Malibu and Calleguas Creeks and the marinas and estuaries that flow into the Pacific Ocean.



## How Can You Help Keep the Watershed Clean?

Whether your home is one mile or many miles from the Pacific Ocean, what starts in your driveway can end up as toxic stormwater runoff and contribute to coastal pollution.

You can do the right thing and keep preventable pollutants out of the storm drain system. Unlike sewer systems, storm drain systems direct runoff, untreated, straight into local waterways.

Preventable pollutants include both seen and unseen materials that accumulate in our yards, driveways, gutters and streets and that damage our watersheds.

Simple changes in the way we care for our vehicles at home can make a big difference in keeping our watersheds clean.

## Maintenance

Maintain your car to prevent oil and fluid leaks so that it runs smoothly and does not pollute our watershed. This will help ensure its value and keep friends and family safe when you drive.



- Check your car regularly for leaks; not only does this help keep the environment clean, it also prolongs the life of your vehicle.
- Always use drip pans to catch leaks when you work on engines or machinery.
- Run the air conditioner every two weeks to prevent cracked seals or Freon leaks. Freon is known to destroy ozone in the atmosphere.







## Do-It-Yourself Clean Vehicle Care Practices

### Fluids



Safely store and dispose of vehicle fluids. If these containers are left outside, they can leak and wash into the storm drain system. Make sure fluids are protected from rain, sprinklers

or any other water source that could carry them into the watershed.

Spilled oil from just ONE oil change can pollute one million gallons of water...a year's supply for 50 people. Animals and children are attracted to the sweet taste of antifreeze, which contains poisonous ethylene glycol. Petroleum products are highly flammable and toxic to people, wildlife and plants.



### Tires

Improperly discarded tires are a fire hazard and can provide a breeding ground for disease-carrying mosquitoes. Burning tires releases toxic fumes. Used tires should

be stored in an area protected from fire and rain. Used tires can be disposed of at tire stores for a small fee. Some Household Hazardous Waste centers may also accept used tires.\*

### When changing fluids at home:

#### DO!

Always put a large drip pan under the crankcase oil opening and radiator when changing or flushing these fluids.

Be sure to store and transport drained fluids in a sealed, spill-proof metal or original plastic container with a tight-fitting lid.

Remember to drain used oil filters into clean, airtight containers. Store the used filter in a leak-proof bag.

Clean up spills immediately using dry cleaning methods like kitty litter or rags.

Recycle used automotive fluids, filters and cleanup materials through a Certified Used Oil Collection Center or local Household Hazardous Waste collection event.\*

#### DON'T!

It is illegal to dump motor oil, petroleum products, antifreeze or any vehicle fluids down a storm drain or on the ground where they can poison the watershed.

Never combine automotive fluids, such as oil and/or antifreeze, into a single recycling container. These are hazardous materials and should not be mixed as they can create a dangerous chemical reaction.

Do not hose down automotive fluid spills. This will send oil, grease, antifreeze and other chemicals into the storm drain system and can result in a fine.

\*Go to [wasteless.org](http://wasteless.org) for Certified Used Oil and Household Hazardous Waste collection center locations and events throughout Ventura County.

### Batteries

Batteries contain both lead and sulfuric acid that can leak into the ground and have adverse health effects on both animals and humans. When buying a new battery, take the old one to the retailer. California law requires retailers to accept batteries if they sell them. Or, you can recycle them through a certified collection center.\*



### Wash

If possible go to a self- or full-service car wash, where wastewater will be treated. If you wash your car at home, use as little water as possible and use a phosphate-free, biodegradable detergent. Consider washing your car on the grass or gravel to reduce runoff. Empty the soap bucket into the toilet or sink and not the street or gutter.

