

Washing Your Vehicle

Do you know where the water goes?



The “**DON'T DUMP !**” signs are placed next to storm drains to remind everyone that gutters and storm drains carry rain as well as any pollutants directly to arroyos, creeks and the ocean without any treatment.

Washing vehicles and equipment outdoors where wash water flows onto paved surfaces or disposing of cleaning solutions or soapy water into gutters and storm drains can pollute and harm or kill wildlife, *even if the cleaning solution is labeled nontoxic or biodegradable*. Wastewater from vehicle and equipment cleaning needs to be treated. This can be accomplished by natural filtration or treatment at a wastewater facility.

- ❑ **Why not use a Commercial Car Wash?** Commercial car washing 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. Whenever possible, take your car to a self or full serve commercial car wash.
- ❑ **Pay Close Attention to the Amount and Types of Chemicals You Use.** Never use engine degreasers, tar removers, or toxic wheel cleaners. These products typically contain petroleum based solvents and may also be highly corrosive. They can create safety hazards for both the environment and for human health. Read the label when you purchase any cleaning product and buy the least hazardous product to protect you, your car, and your family.
- ❑ **If you must use Detergent, make sure it is Phosphate Free and Biodegradable.** It is a common misconception that a phosphate free, biodegradable detergent is completely safe for the environment. Any detergent can impact the environment.
- ❑ **Use as Little Water as Possible.** Don't let your garden hose run when you are not using it. Remember, the more clean water you use, the more wastewater you generate.
- ❑ **Don't let Wash or Rinse Water Run Off the Site!**

For more information on preventing stormwater pollution visit: www.vcstormwater.org or call _____

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