



Stormwater Outreach for Washing Your Vehicle

Cars, pickups, and other vehicles cannot be washed in the street or in locations where the wastewater runs off into city streets. The wastewater from washing your vehicle contains detergents, oil, grease, and other vehicle fluids, along with sediment and heavy metals such as lead, copper, zinc, and cadmium that are washed off vehicles. If this wastewater makes it into the street, it flows untreated to storm drains that empty into the creeks that flow through the city. Storm drains do NOT empty into sewer pipelines that carry wastewater from our sinks and toilets to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The Walla Walla River and its tributaries are designated as water quality limited (degraded) by the State of Washington and we need your cooperation to improve the water quality of our rivers and creeks. Some of our local creeks exceed water quality standards for fecal coliform, pesticides, temperature, and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). High levels of fecal coliform, which come from pet waste and failed septic systems, make fish, animals, and people sick and can make swimming unsafe. Pesticides and PCBs can be toxic to aquatic life and may cause cancer. Also, warmer water contains less oxygen that aquatic organisms need to survive.

[Chapter 13.15 of the Walla Walla Municipal Code](#) prohibits the discharge of any material other than clean, uncontaminated stormwater into the City storm drain system, underground injection control wells (i.e., drywells), and/or surface and ground waters such as Mill Creek or any of the many other creeks running through the city. Prohibited contaminants listed in the code include, but are not limited to, trash, debris, petroleum products, paints, detergents, drain cleaners, pesticides, fertilizer, chlorinated swimming pool or spa wastewater, chlorine, bromine, other disinfectants, food wastes, lawn clippings, silt, sediment, concrete, and sewage. Storm drains do NOT empty into sewer pipelines that carry wastewater from our sinks and toilets to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Only clean stormwater may be discharged into stormwater systems, including drywells, and surface or ground waters.

The following are best practices of what you can do to help prevent and reduce stormwater pollution:

- Visit one of the commercial car washes in the city and have someone else make your vehicle shine.
- Wash your vehicle on a grassy area, gravel surface, or other pervious surface where the wastewater can soak into the ground instead of draining into the street.
- Divert the wastewater to the sides of your driveway into grassy areas or plant beds instead of draining into the street.

Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated. Please be advised that violations of the above-referenced municipal code could result in fines, penalties, or other remedies as allowable by law.

Remember...only rain down the drain. Keep our rivers and creeks healthy!

Questions and/or Comments?

Contact the City of Walla Walla Stormwater Coordinator at 509.527.4537