



## Stormwater Outreach for Gas Stations and Car Care Businesses

Gas stations and car care facilities are potential sources of a wide variety of substances that are very harmful to fish and other aquatic life. Stormwater picks up fuel, oil, grease, antifreeze, and other fluids that leak from vehicles. Vehicles also contribute sediment and heavy metals such as lead, zinc, copper, and cadmium to stormwater runoff. If these substances make it into the street, it flows untreated to storm drains that empty into the creeks that flow through the city.

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:

### **Vehicle Maintenance**

- All waste fluids from vehicle maintenance must be properly disposed of and may not be discharged in the street or storm drains.
- Windshield washing reservoirs may not be dumped in the street or gutter.

### **Facility Maintenance**

- Water from areas where vehicles are maintained indoors must not be allowed to flow outside or be washed out into the street.
- Outdoor paved areas containing dirt, oil, or other fluid residue may not be hosed off into the street. Dirt must be swept up and fluids need to be cleaned up with absorbent cloths or other absorbent material such as cat litter. All used absorbent material must be picked up and disposed of properly in the garbage.

### **Car Washing**

- Vehicles cannot be washed in the street or in locations where the wastewater runs off into city streets. This wastewater not only contains detergents but also oil, grease, and other vehicle fluids; sediment and



heavy metals such as lead, copper, zinc, and cadmium. Detergents add excessive nutrients to our creeks, which can lead to algae blooms and reduced oxygen levels that kill aquatic life.

#### **Gas and Oil Spills**

- Any spills or leakage of gas, oil or other vehicle fluid needs to be cleaned up and prevented from flowing or being washed into the street. Clean up all spills and leaks of fuel, oil, antifreeze, or other fluids with absorbent cloths or other absorbent material such as cat litter. All used absorbent material must be picked up and disposed of properly in the garbage.
- Vehicles that are leaking oil or other fluids and are being stored outdoors should have a drip pan placed underneath to catch leaks.

#### **Garbage/Waste Disposal**

- Garbage and waste material must be disposed of properly and may not be placed, washed, or allowed to flow into streets, alleys, storm drains, or creeks.
- Garbage cans or dumpsters located outdoors need to be kept under shelter, covered to keep out rainfall or in areas where runoff cannot flow into streets, alleys, storm drains, or creeks.
- If garbage containing liquid residue is placed in these receptacles, liquids need to be drained as much as possible to prevent leakage.
- If liquid does leak out of garbage cans or dumpsters, it needs to be contained and cleaned up using absorbent material. Contact the Solid Waste Division at 527-4591 to replace leaking cans and dumpsters.

#### **Dirt and Sediment**

- Dirt, sand, gravel, bark, or other landscaping material may not be stockpiled or stored in the street.
- Care needs to be exercised to prevent exposed soil from eroding 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