

What you can do:

Use commercial car wash facilities where wash water is treated and cleaned before it is returned to our streams.

If you do wash your car at home:

- wash it on gravel, grass, or other permeable surfaces
- use plain water with a coarse sponge or biodegradable soaps
- use a trigger nozzle on your hose or a bucket to conserve water
- visit our website for more information: www.springsgov.com/cityengineering

Contact Information

City Engineering/Stormwater Drainage
(719) 385-5980

www.springsgov.com/cityengineering

Colorado Water Protection Project

(303) 861-5195

(888) 861-9969

www.ourwater.org



Car Washing



Did you know storm water runoff in El Paso County is not treated, but goes directly into our streams and creeks? That is why it is important to insure that pollutants such as pet waste, automotive fluids, soaps and dirt from car washing, trash, garbage and chemicals do not end up in the storm drains.

Water washing over the land can pick up an array of contaminants that can run off into or streams and creeks either directly or through our storm sewer systems. The Environmental Protection Agency has determined that pollution from this runoff is the largest cause of water quality problems in the U.S.

Everyday personal actions you take can have a significant impact on the water quality of our local streams and creeks. Remember that while the individual household might contribute only minor amounts of pollution, the combined effect of a neighborhood or a city is serious.

Car Washing

Changing the way you wash your car can help. Outdoor car washing has the potential to result in high loads of nutrients, dirt, metals, and hydrocarbons as the detergent-rich water used to wash the grime off our cars flows down the driveway and the street and into the storm drain. These pollutants degrade the water quality of our streams and endanger the wildlife that lives in or near the streams.

Small concentrations of detergents in our streams can kill fish and their eggs, as well as inhibit their ability to reproduce. Detergents also add to the problems of aquatic life by lowering the surface tension of water. Fish then much more readily absorb organic chemicals, such as pesticides and fertilizers. Detergents can destroy the fish's external mucus layers that protect them from bacteria and parasites and they severely damage the fish's gills.

In addition to the detergents, driveway car wash discharges consist of dirt, grease, oil, and other automotive fluids, metals and other elements from brake linings, rust, rubber, trace amounts of benzene and chromium, as well as other pollutants. All of these pollutants cause serious water quality problems in our streams and creeks.



Commercial car wash facilities, on the other hand, are required to treat their wash water discharge before releasing it to sanitary sewer systems where the water is cleaned prior to release back into our surface waters. Additionally, most commercial car washes use 60% less water in the entire washing process than simply rinsing your car at home. Some recycle their water.

Changing the way you wash your car is something that everyone can do to make a difference in the quality of our surface waters. Proper individual actions can result in significant water quality improvement when carried out by the majority. Unlike some forms of stormwater pollutants, the individual citizens of our community can easily and economically manage this source of stormwater pollution.

