

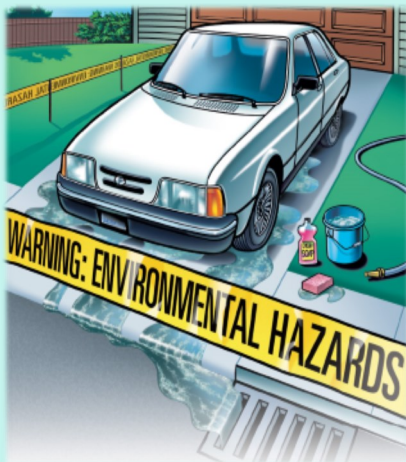
GREEN, CLEAN CAR WASHING



It's that time of the year again! This pollen season, make your car wash experience more eco-friendly and prevent stormwater pollution.

When people think of stormwater pollution, the last thing that comes to mind is traditional, hands-on car washing. However, consider what might be on your car when you wash it:

... dirt... gasoline... tar... oil... road salts...



...and other items that carry toxic chemicals. The water you use from the hose to wash the car transports all of these pollutants. Then where do they go?

They flow down the driveway...

into the nearest storm drain...

and into the creek, stream, or river.

As you can imagine, this is not good for water quality and life within our local water bodies. It may even warrant these bodies of water being deemed unsafe for our own recreational use! By alternating your car washing routine, you can significantly reduce the environmental impact on local water quality and wildlife while benefiting from more eco-friendly options.

Whether you're headed to a local car wash or to your front yard, read these great tips on greening your car wash routine:



Head to a “self-serve” or full-service car wash

Public car washes have specialized storm drains that send all excess water to a treated water plant, or they collect their water and recycle it. They also tend to use environmentally-friendly soaps. These places are under strict permitting and environmental regulations. This is by far the greenest option to get your car shining like new!



Wash your car on an area that absorbs water

Instead of washing your car on a paved surface, opt for an absorptive one that has grass or gravel. These surfaces will soak up compounds from the carwash instead of storm drains guzzling them up. If you can't move your car, use rolled towels, a hose, or sandbags to divert runoff to a grassy or gravel area.



Wash using a bucket and soapy water

Soap and water usually work well. If you need a special cleaning product for vehicles, be sure to read the label carefully to make sure you're using a non-toxic, phosphate-free, biodegradable detergent. Don't use a product that says Poison, Harmful, or Danger. Using a bucket will help you remember to turn the water off while you're washing the car. Just remember to dump the bucket in the toilet or sink when you're done, instead of down your driveway!



Use a hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle

A standard garden hose uses about 10 gallons of water per minute. This means you use 100 gallons of water with only a 10-minute car wash! When you use an automatic shutoff nozzle on your hose, water does not flow continuously while you wash your vehicle. This can save as much as 70 gallons per wash.

Being environmentally friendly doesn't have to be some outrageous, time-consuming routine. Just a small change or two in your routine can make a huge difference in our community!



What About Vehicle Washing at NASA Langley???

You've heard us say over and over again, "The storm drain is just for rain." Well, what about car washing facilities? In fact, NASA Langley has *three* state-approved car wash locations on Center!



In order to operate a car washing facility in the Commonwealth, Virginia requires operators of car washes to have a permit called the General Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) Permit for Car Wash Facilities. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issues these permits for vehicle washing operations in order to limit the pollutants entering into streams, rivers, and bays. These permits place strict policies and procedures on car washing operations to make them as environmentally-friendly as possible. LaRC has a VPDES permit that covers the three car wash locations on Center, with strict guidelines in place for each location to ensure we are compliant with the state's requirements and are minimizing our impact on the streams and rivers around LaRC.

Here's some information about those three vehicle washing locations on Center:

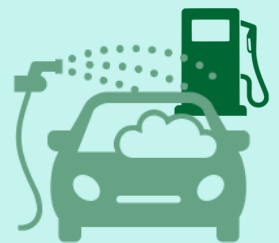
Exchange Car Wash

This operation, near B1216, is a small-scale manual car wash provided by the NASA LaRC Exchange Operation. This service is available to LaRC employees for a nominal fee (**personal vehicles only**). The car wash vendor brings his own water (via a tank in his vehicle) to use for washing cars, and only uses about 7-10 gallons of water per car. The operation results in minimal runoff and is environmentally friendly.

FUN FACT: The vendor also utilizes a small solar power array to provide for the low pressure water hose and vacuum services!

Vehicle Maintenance

This operation occurs at the vehicle maintenance and fueling facility (B1199), and is a small scale, single bay manual wash operation for NASA LaRC's fleet vehicles (**no personal vehicles**). Runoff from the vehicle washing operations flows to a grassy and woody area, where the water is able to be filtered through the ground naturally.



Fire Station

This operation is a single-bay (driveway) manual wash operation for NASA LaRC's **fire and rescue vehicles only** (B1248). The washing operations are only operated by Fire Station personnel. Runoff from the vehicle washing flows down the driveway and has very minimal discharge into a downstream storm drain inlet. In fact, most of the water from washing the vehicles is absorbed into cracks in the gutter or hits grassy areas and rarely reaches the nearest storm drain.



Protecting the Waters Around NASA Langley

The Environmental Office takes great care to ensure our vehicle washing operations aren't allowing harmful chemicals and toxins to enter the environment.



These are some of the policies and procedures in place for each wash facility:

- LaRC's Water Manager performs weekly inspections and coordinates periodic water sampling and analysis. The Water Manager also ensures compliance with permit requirements and renewal.
- Vehicle washing operators must notify the Water Manager (4-7517) if any changes to the wash operation occur, including requests to change chemicals used and/or significant changes in frequency of operations.
- Only approved wash locations and products may be used.
- The LaRC Exchange and Vendor are responsible for reporting the number of washes conducted each calendar year.
- Good housekeeping and proper storage for products must be maintained for each wash facility. In order to minimize the likelihood of a spill, products should not be stored outside in the weather.
- Any detected spill will be attended to immediately and in accordance with the Integrated Spill Contingency Plan (ISCP).
- Spill cleanup materials and equipment should be readily accessible and personnel should be knowledgeable of their location.



For more stormwater pollution prevention information, call 4-7517 or visit <http://environmental.larc.nasa.gov>

