



# TIPS FOR RESIDENTIAL CAR WASHING

Urban runoff from car washing activities contains chemicals that can harm aquatic life and make the ocean unsafe for swimming. This runoff will drain into our natural canyons and could cause harm to our natural canyons and streams. You can minimize your impact on the ocean and local waterways when washing cars at home by following these simple tips!

## **Location, Location, Location**

- Wash cars on a pervious surface such as a grassy, gravel, or pervious paving area where the rinse water can soak into the ground, or where it will runoff into a landscaped area, **not into the street and storm drain.**
- Ensure that any runoff will not contact oil and grease in the flow path to prevent introduction of pollutants prior to discharge to streets and canyons.
- Alternatively, take your car to a commercial car wash, the water is often recycled and wastewater is sent to the sanitary sewer system where it is treated.

## **Be Prepared**

Prepare the site and gather proper materials:

- Remove oil and grease from paved surfaces prior to washing using an absorbent material such as flour or cat litter; then dispose in the trash.
- Minimize water use by using a quick release nozzle.
- Choose soaps/detergents labeled as less toxic or phosphate-free found at retailers and online.
- Don't use engine and wheel cleaners and degreasers.

## **Clean and Green**

While washing cars:

- The amount of water used must be minimized by employing water conservation practices such as using a quick-release nozzle or using a low volume pressure washer.
- Empty buckets of soapy or rinse water into the sanitary sewer or septic system (e.g., sinks or toilets).

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