



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Town of Truckee Clean Water Program

RESIDENTIAL CAR WASHING AND STORMWATER

Q: Is it a violation of the Municipal Code to wash my car at home?

A: No. The Town of Truckee holds a stormwater permit that requires implementation of an ordinance to prohibit putting anything down the storm drains containing pollutants such as soapy water. Residential car washing is not a violation as it is specifically excluded from the permit. Because of this, the Town of Truckee is using an educational approach for “River Friendly” residential car washing. However, washing commercial vehicles and fundraising car washes are in violation if dirty water enters the storm drain from these activities.

Q: Why is there a problem with car wash water going into the storm drain?

A: Water that enters the storm drain goes into pipes and directly into our streams and lakes. This wash water (and stormwater) does NOT go to the sewer treatment plant like water from your sinks and toilets. It is NOT treated before going into our waterways. Car wash water contains pollutants such as soap, oil, grease, heavy metals, and dirt. Soapy water and the chemicals in detergent is harmful to fish and other animals.

Q: How can my few gallons of soapy water cause damage?

A: The biggest contribution to pollution in Truckee is stormwater. Stormwater runs down paved surfaces and collects all the pollutants that accumulates between storms, such as soap, oil, grease, dirt, pet waste, and trash. The accumulation of all the pollutants adds up. By doing our part to prevent pollution, by washing our cars carefully, picking up after our pets, being careful with pesticides and fertilizers, we can help reduce and prevent pollution.

Q: What about the big fundraising car washes for schools and youth organizations?

A: Fundraiser car washing activities are prohibited if dirty water discharges to the storm drain. The Town does provide education to those groups to assist in preventing pollution such as:

- Providing a list of local car washes willing to provide rentals or reduced cost tickets for a charity car wash.
- Information on how to locate a car wash fundraiser where discharge will disperse across a grassy area and filter into the ground, not down the storm drain system.
- Information for a ‘River Friendly Car Wash’ for groups to distribute

Town of Truckee Clean Water Program

RESIDENTIAL CAR WASHING AND STORMWATER

Q: How do I wash my car to prevent pollution?

A: You can wash your car at home and prevent stormwater pollution if you:

- Park your car on grass or gravel so water can infiltrate into the ground, not into the storm drain. If the driveway drains to a place where water can infiltrate, that is ok also.
- Dump soapy water into the sink or a place water can infiltrate.
- Use non-toxic soaps
- Use a hose with a shut off valve to conserve water and reduce run-off volume

If these options are not available, take your car to a commercial car wash that recycles water and drains to a sanitary sewer.

Q: Is the Town of Truckee going to fine me for washing my car in the driveway?

A: No. The Town is taking a public education approach to residential car washing. Overtime, we expect to see habits change, like we have with recycling.



For More Information Contact:
Jessica Thompson
Town of Truckee
10183 Truckee Airport Road
Truckee CA 96161-3306
Ph: 530.582.2938
WWW.KEEPTRUCKEEGREEN.COM