



Water Quality: A Citizen's Guide



Oil and Water Don't Mix

The fluids that leak or drip from your automobile eventually end up in our rivers, lakes, and streams. Did you know that even though your home may be miles away from a lake or a river, the chemicals that spill on your driveway or parking lot find their way to our local waterways? The mid-Michigan area is home to three separate watersheds: the Grand River, Red Cedar River, and Looking Glass River Watersheds. The rainwater, soiled water from washing your car, and any toxic chemicals which are allowed to enter drainage ditches and storm sewers end up flowing into these watersheds. Keeping hazardous chemicals from entering the watershed is an important task for everyone to keep in mind.

Here are suggestions how the proper maintenance of your automobile plays a key role in keeping our surface water clean.

- Repair any leaks and drips from your automobile. This includes: motor oil, transmission fluid, anti-freeze/coolant, power steering fluid, brake fluid, gasoline and other lubricants. Remember, these chemicals are also dangerous to your pets.
- If you choose to change your own oil, do not dump the used oil in the yard, on your driveway, or in a storm drain. Find a local firm that will recycle the used oil.

- Do not use used motor oil to control dust on gravel drives.
- Wash your car on the grass to filter out impurities or take it to a commercial car wash where the water is reclaimed (check local ordinances first).
- Basic automobile maintenance such as tune-ups, proper tire inflation, and efficient driving practices saves on fuel, as well as water and air pollution.
- Abandoned automobiles should be taken to a scrap yard or donated to a local charity. Old cars sitting out in a field will leak oil and fuel.

Having a clean environment is of primary importance for our health and economy. Clean waterways provide recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, and add beauty to our landscape. All of us benefit from clean water - and all of us have a role in getting and keeping our lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater clean. For more easy steps on protecting our lakes and streams, visit www.mywatersheds.org.

