

### How can a charity car wash harm our environment?

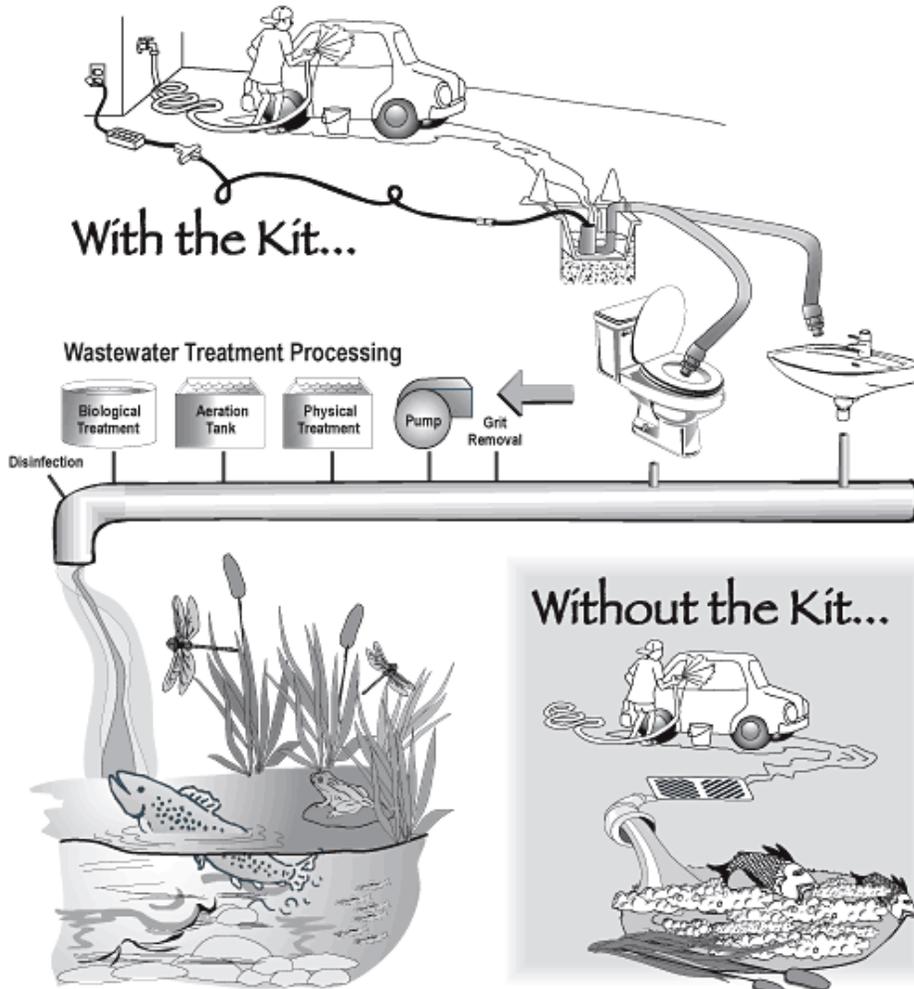
A car wash uses soap and water to clean cars. The used wash water contains soap, dirt, grease, and heavy metals, some pretty serious pollutants. A commercial car wash facility is required to collect and send this dirty water for treatment. Casual car washes done in parking lots or at homes send all of these pollutants into the stormwater drain which feed directly into our waterways without treatment. This is bad news for aquatic ecosystems.

### How Much Polluted Water Does the Average Car Wash Use

A standard 5/8" garden hose running at 50 pounds per square inch uses 10 gallons of water per minute (this is without the use of a nozzle that stops the continuous flow of water). The average person, who takes extreme care not to waste water, takes 5-6 minutes to wash and rinse their car for a total consumption of 50-60 gallons. For individuals who allow the water to run while they clean, this number can jump to a staggering 150-200 gallons.

### What should I do to keep our waters clean?

A car wash kit will catch the dirty water and pump it back into the sewer system. This way the dirty water will get treated at the Waste Water Treatment Plant before it enters any of our waterways. Here's how it works.



### Where do I get a car wash kit?

You have three options.

- 1) Create your own following the instructions below.
- 2) Purchase a pre-made kit. Searching the internet for “car wash kit” will provide you with an array of companies that sell kits. Just be sure the kit contains the necessary items, which are indicated in the How To section of this page.
- 3) Borrow one from your municipality. Many municipalities in the area will provide car wash kits.
  - a. If you live in....
    - i. Mount Vernon Call: **Coming Soon!**
    - ii. Anacortes Call: (360) 293-1921
    - iii. Burlington Call: **Coming Soon!**
    - iv. Sedro Woolley Call: **Coming Soon!**

### Build my own? How do I do that?

Building your own is a great option if your group does a lot of car washes. Most car wash kit items can be purchased at your local hardware store. Here’s what you’ll need.

- **Storm drain insert:** a plastic tub that is inserted into the storm drain after the grate is removed. The pump is placed inside the tub insert. (Once the tub is filled with soapy water it is pumped out through the attached hose.) The tub insert needs to fit the size of the open storm drain. You may have to purchase a tub insert for this purpose from a company that makes Car Wash Kits.
- **Pump:** (Small 1/6 (one-sixth) horsepower **submersible sump pump**).
- **GFCI adapter plug** - Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupter (Class A).
- **100 foot hose** (garden hose 5/8” – minimum 50’) to connect pump to sink or toilet.
- **100 foot electrical cord** (electrical extension cord, 16 gauge).
- 1 economy **grate puller** – caution, the grate is heavy.
- 2 or more orange safety **road cones** to go around the open grate.
- **Traffic vests** for safety.
- 1 heavy duty **nylon carry bag** or any type of container to put all kit items in for storage.

### Now that I’ve got a kit how do I use it?

1. Locate the nearest storm drain, electrical plug in and sink and/or toilet. (The storm drain should be located where the water from the car wash will drain.)
2. Put on your traffic vests.
3. Set up your road cones in the street next to your storm drain.
4. Pull up the storm drain grate using a metal hook. **Caution:** the grate will be very heavy. Avoid injury.
5. Place the tub in the catch basin. (This is the opening after the grate is removed.) Make sure the safety road cones are around this opening to prevent someone from falling or driving into the drain.
6. Attach the hose to the pump.
7. Attach the electrical cord to the pump cord. Put it in the tub.
8. The directions with the pump will tell you when to plug it in. You may need water in the tub before turning on the pump.
9. Place the other end of the hose into the nearest toilet, sink or floor drain.
10. Follow all safety instructions with any equipment or kits purchased.