



CITY OF PORT ORCHARD Public Works Department

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Water Pollution and Fundraiser (Charity) Car Washes

As part of the City of Port Orchard's public education efforts to promote clean stormwater runoff and prevent illicit discharges from entering the storm drainage system and our local waterways, we are contacting the owners of properties where fundraiser groups have held car washes in the past or may request hosting in the future due to their desirable location.

The Problem

Car washes have long been a favorite fundraiser for scout troops, schools and other non-profit groups. They provide a needed service, can be done with little capital investment, and are very visible. Only in the last few years have we become more aware of the environmental impact these car washes can have. Dirty water containing soaps, detergents, gasoline, motor oils, and residue from exhaust fumes are washed off of the cars and flow directly to the nearest storm drain. All by itself, one car wash may not seem to be contributing that much, but collectively, each of these car washes, done on a regular basis as they are in our community, contributes some very serious pollution.

Keeping pollutants out of our storm drain system protects our local creeks, bays, and Puget Sound. Materials swept, blown, or washed into the storm drains end up in these open waters where they degrade water quality and harm aquatic life. Discharging pollutants to storm drains is a violation of Federal, State, and local statutes and can result in fines. Property owners are responsible for insuring that no illicit discharges are released from their property.

The Solution

Fundraiser car washes are NOT banned, but they must be conducted in a manner that prevents the wash water runoff from entering the storm drain system. This may be accomplished by directing or discharging it into the sanitary sewer system.

The most common method of collecting the runoff for discharge to the sanitary sewer involves the use of a "car wash kit". You may purchase a kit ready-made or from components available at your local hardware or home improvement store. The kits

consists of a pump, hose, extension cord with ground fault protection, catch basin grate hook, safety cones, and either a tub to collect the water or a catch basin plug.



CAR WASH KIT WITH TUB INSERT

Assistance

Upon your request, City staff can help you determine if an environmentally-friendly car wash is feasible at your location and provide you with further information and technical assistance on the necessary equipment and installation procedures. For further information or to request technical assistance, you may contact me at (360) 876-4991.

Sincerely,

Andrea Archer, P.E.
Assistant City Engineer/Stormwater Manager

