



**City of Phoenix**

WATER SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION  
Quality Reliability Value

# Washing your car affects your water quality; How to do it sustainably!

The best option: Take your car to a **commercial carwash!**

-They often recycle their wash water multiple times.

-They are legally required to capture the wash water and send it for treatment.



 PHXWATER

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[Phoenix.gov/Stormwater](http://Phoenix.gov/Stormwater)

Or call us: (602)256-3190



Cars are covered in soil, brake dust (which contains copper), oil, gasoline, and other chemicals that shouldn't be washed into the nearest washes and rivers!

If you wash your car at home, be sure you:

-Wash vehicles on grass or gravel to allow water to soak into the ground and contaminants to filter out.

-Use biodegradable soap. Soap is a common contaminant in water and difficult to break down.

-Be mindful of how much water is being used. Fill a bucket instead of letting the hose run.

## What's wrong with washing a vehicle on the driveway?

Vehicles are covered in everyday chemicals they encounter on the road (oils and grease, gasoline and engine fluid, brake dust and soil) which will travel down the driveway, along the curb, into a catch basin, through a pipe and into the nearest wash or river. This water goes **UNTREATED**. Even if the wash water evaporates, the chemicals remain on your driveway or street until it rains, then are picked up by the rain water and carried to a wash or river.

When you wash your vehicle on a permeable surface, like your lawn, the water is filtered and these chemicals can soak into the ground.

**Always remember to use biodegradable soaps and waxes!**