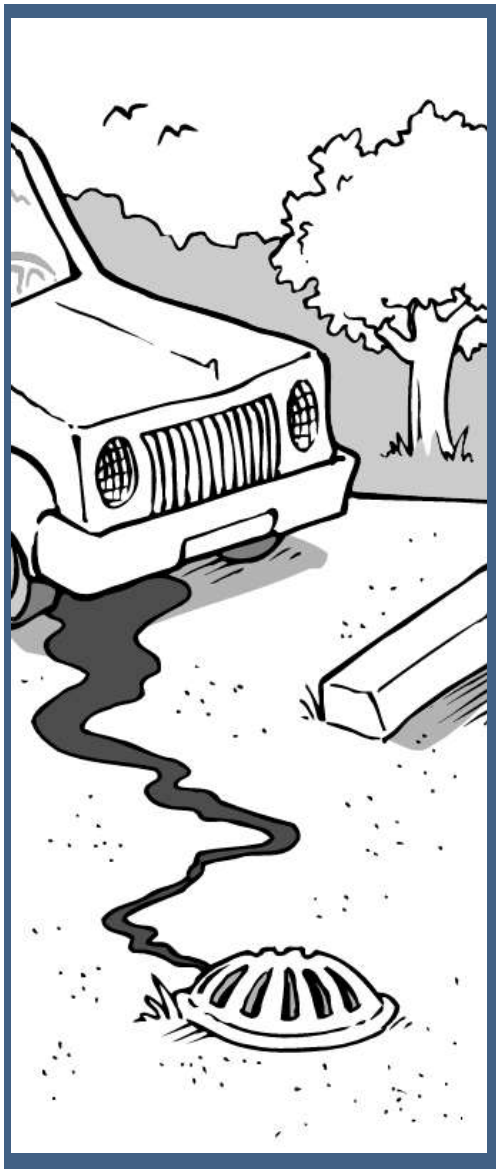
Community Partners for Clean Streams

Maintaining Vehicles and Equipment

Dirty and poorly maintained equipment and vehicles can deposit oil, grit, coolants, and other pollutants onto the ground. From there, these pollutants can filter through soils to the ground water table or be washed directly into neighboring waterways with stormwater.

Designing outdoor maintenance areas to completely contain leaks and spills is an important part of protecting water quality. Equip drains with shutoff valves, construct curbs or berms where necessary and connect appropriate drains to a dead-end holding area or the sanitary sewers.



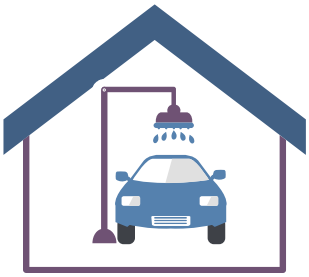
Seven Steps to Protect Water Quality

1 **Keep equipment and vehicles clean and regularly inspect them for leaks.**

Try to immediately repair and clean up any leaks that are found. Wash equipment and vehicles indoor when possible or take them to a commercial washing facility.

2 **Maintain equipment and vehicles indoors.**

If maintenance activities must take place outdoors, make sure they are performed only in designated areas that are clearly marked and designed to prevent water pollution.



3 **Never locate wash areas within a floodplain or within 100 feet of a drinking water well, wetland, lake, stream or stormwater management system.**

Businesses that generate wash water outdoors are subject to State of Michigan permit requirements. Because of State permit requirements and potential threats to the environment, if you are unable to wash equipment and vehicles indoors, it's best to take them to a commercial washing facility.

4 **Keep service areas clean and take steps to prevent spills.**

When servicing your vehicle, concrete areas are best at preventing pollutants from filtering into the ground. Keep drip pans and absorbent materials readily available, to accommodate any spills. If possible, buy absorbent materials that can be reused or recycled. When cleaning floors, take steps to prevent pollutants from entering the stormwater management system.

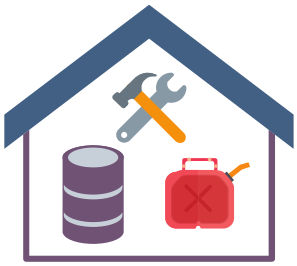
Do not allow storage, fueling, or maintenance areas to drain to any part of a stormwater management system.

5 **Take care when fueling.**

Gasoline and other fuels are extremely toxic and can be highly flammable. Make sure that dispensing hoses are equipped with automatic shutoff valves. Post signs instructing fuel pump operators not to overfill gas tanks or leave them unattended while fueling. Keep temporary fuel tanks in a paved area surrounded by a berm. Design the area to completely contain at least 110% of the tank's total volume.

6 **Properly store, use and dispose of maintenance products.**

Cover storage and maintenance areas, along with maintenance products, to keep rainwater from entering and mixing with pollutants.



7 **Discharge equipment condensate and "blowdown" to the sanitary sewer.**

Air compressors and other equipment sometimes produce small quantities of blowdown water which contains lubricating oil and other pollutants. Discharge blowdown water using the sanitary sewer.

Wash With Care

Pressure washing is a common and effective way to care for your equipment and vehicles. If you must wash on-site, only wash in designated areas that are designed to properly manage waste water.

Pressure washing should be done on your site only if you are equipped to capture and properly dispose of all wash water. To reduce the amount of water being dispersed, use high pressure-low volume water. Avoid using acids or other harsh cleaning products and detergents that contain phosphates.

Discharge wash water to the sanitary sewer, an enclosed holding tank, or a grassy area where the water will be contained. Do not allow it to drain off-site via a roadside ditch, storm drain, stream, or any other part of the stormwater management system.

Clean field equipment and vehicles with as little water as possible. Remove dirt and grit using wire brushes or other dry methods before applying solvent or water. Be sure to collect the dislodged material and dispose of it properly.