



City of Burien

Public Works Department
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Burien WA. 98166
(206) 439-3154

Residential Car Wash Information

Do you Know?

- Stormwater systems are not connected to sanitary sewer systems and are constructed to collect runoff from streets, sidewalks, parking lots, yards drains, roof drains, and other uncontaminated water
- Without proper prevention measures or Best Management Practices (BMPs), the use of soaps and other cleaners with wash water can be discharged into stormwater systems and released directly into our Lake Burien, Salmon Creek, Walker Creek, Miller Creek, and Puget Sound, which can result in destroying aquatic habitat and life
- Washing cars with soaps and sending soapy water into stormwater systems is prohibited. Per Burien Municipal Code (BMC) 13.10.240, the violation is considered an illicit discharge, which can incur a monetary fine
- Soaps that are labeled “biodegradable, environmentally friendly” or “nontoxic” are still harmful to aquatic life and water quality; As a result, these are also prohibited from entering stormwater systems. The “nontoxic” means the soap is less toxic to the user



Lake Burien



What if I want to wash my car at home?

Per 2009 *King County Storm Water Pollution Prevention Manual* requirements, which has been adopted by the City, the following are recommended Best Management Practices (BMPs) if you use soaps or other cleaners;

- Wash your car on non-paved areas, such as your lawn or landscaped areas, where the wash water can seep into the ground
- If you wash on a paved area such as your driveway, reroute wash water away from storm drains to vegetated areas using temporary measures such as berms and boom/socks placed at the low point of where your car is parked
- If you wash on a paved area such as your driveway, use a wet vacuum to collect the wash water and dispose it into your sanitary sewer systems



Walker Creek



Other Tips

Your local sewer authority may have limits on the types and amount of pollutions that can be discharged to a sanitary sewer. Contact them as identified on your sewer bills may be required.

- Rinse down the body (not engine) of your car with just water without doing any wash water BMPs on a paved area such as your driveway
- Wash your car at a commercial car wash facility. The commercial car wash can recycle the wash/soapy water and drain it into their sanitary sewer systems
- Use a hose nozzle with a trigger and shut it off when you are not using it to conserve water
- Clean or pressure wash car engines only at a commercial car wash
- Use waterless car wash products on the markets such as cloths, rags, etc, and properly dispose them

If you have any questions or comments about this residential car wash information, please contact Storm Water Management Engineering Technician, Ken Srilofung at (206) 439-3154 or kens@burienwa.gov

More car wash information is available from the State Department of Ecology website at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/CarWash.html>

References

2009 Stormwater pollution Prevention Manual:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/stormwater/documents/pollution-prevention-manual.aspx>

Burien Municipal Code (BMC): <http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/burien/>