

## Alachua County Water Quality Code

Chapter 77 (Ordinance 02-27)  
prohibits non-storm water discharges into  
storm water management systems,  
which includes most roads.

### The Storm Drain System

was built to collect and transport rain to  
prevent flooding in urban areas. In most areas,  
anything that flows or is discharged into the  
storm drain system goes directly into local  
creeks without any treatment.



Outdoor car washing can contribute high  
loads of pollutants to our local creeks and  
water bodies when improperly conducted.

Car wash runoff should not reach the  
Storm Drain System. Following the Best  
Management Practices (BMPs) outlined  
here will help you be in compliance with  
the Water Quality Code and will improve  
water quality in Alachua County.

## Resources

Type the following phrases into your web  
browser to find more information:

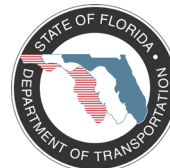
River Safe Car Wash Resources

EPA Stormwater Menu of BMPs Residential  
Car Washing

To learn more about our local water resources  
and how to protect them, visit:

Alachua County Environmental Protection Department  
[www.AlachuaCountyWater.org](http://www.AlachuaCountyWater.org)

Gainesville Clean Water Partnership  
[www.GainesvilleCreeks.org](http://www.GainesvilleCreeks.org)



### In this guide:

- Information on potential sources of water pollution from car washing activities.
- How to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent water pollution in Alachua County.

# BEST

## Management Practices

The best way to keep your car clean without polluting local waterways is to take it to a commercial car wash that recycles the rinse water. If this is not an option, minimize your impact by following the BMPs below.

- **Wash on an area that absorbs water, such as gravel, grass, or loose soil.**

This way, soapy water can filter through vegetation and soil before entering ground water or running off into a ditch or storm drain. It is acceptable to let the wash water soak into the ground as long as you are only using biodegradable, phosphate-free cleaner to wash the exterior of the vehicle.

- **Wash only the car exterior.**

Do not wash engines, undercarriages, truck cargo bays, or mounted equipment and tanks that may contain toxic materials.

- **If you can't work in an absorbent area, then contain the wash water.**

Use a wash water containment mat, boom, or other device to contain the wash water and pump it to the sanitary sewer (local sewer authorities must be contacted and a letter of approval must be obtained) or to a sandy or grassy area.

- **Minimize water usage.**

Use a spray gun with flow restriction to minimize water usage and runoff. Use hoses with nozzles that automatically turn off when left unattended. Use buckets for soapy water to "re-soap" rags and sponges rather than adding soap directly to rags or sponges. Recycle rinse water as wash water.

Soap residues from waste water entering Tumblin' Creek. Don't let this be the result of your car wash!

## Fund-raisers

All by itself, your car wash may not seem to be contributing that much, but collectively, each car wash done on a regular basis contributes some serious pollution to our local water resources. Follow these tips to protect our water.

- **Do not hold your car wash at a location that will discharge wash water to the storm water collection system.**

This includes roads and parking lots.

- **Find a commercial car wash sponsor for your car wash that uses a closed loop washing system - one that recycles its water.**

- **Ask a local commercial car wash to donate a part of the day's proceeds** or see if they will allow you to market a special wash ticket.

- **Hold your car wash at an industrial or commercial site that has a designated equipment / vehicle wash area that is directly connected to the sanitary sewer.**

The property owner is responsible for all necessary discharge permits.

- **Rent a mobile washing system that can contain the water on the site and vacuum up any excess water.**

Although not inexpensive, collecting and rerouting the waste water is the only way to protect the storm drain system and our creeks.

- **Use biodegradable, phosphate-free water based cleaners only.**

Do not use halogenated compounds, petroleum based cleaners, or phenolic based cleaners.

- **Store materials securely and label them clearly.** Use as few different products as possible to reduce inventory, product incompatibilities, and disposal problems.

- **Have spill containment and absorbents on hand for product spills.**

