

A Citizen's Guide to Auto Care



How we take care of our cars, trucks, and other vehicles greatly influences the health of the Grand River. You can do your part to stop pollution at the source by preventing detergents, oil, grease, and gasoline from entering street drains, which lead directly to nearby streams and lakes.

Vehicle washing

- Look for non-toxic and phosphate-free cleansers at your local grocery store.
- You can also use alternative cleaners, such as baking soda and lemon juice. Avoid products with bleach, ammonia, lye, or petroleum distillates (*see chart*).

Fuel and oil

- When fueling, avoid topping off! Remember that fuel expands as it warms up in your tank.
- Store fuel only in approved containers.
- Routinely check for and fix oil and fuel leaks.
- Recycle your waste oil. Never dump it down a street drain!



Engine care

- Keep vehicle engines properly tuned for efficient fuel consumption and clean exhaust.
- Use a drip pan when doing engine maintenance. Drippings left on the cement get washed into nearby drains and end up in our streams.

Product	Better Alternative
Bleach	Borax or hydrogen peroxide
Chrome cleaner	Apple cider vinegar to clean and baby oil to polish
Engine cleaner	Steam clean the engine in a dedicated service area
Fiberglass stain remover	Baking soda paste, scrub pad, and "elbow grease"
Paint stripper	Physically remove old paint without chemical use
Scouring powders	Baking soda and "elbow grease"
Window cleaner	Vinegar and lemon juice mixed in lukewarm water
Wood polish	Olive oil or almond oil for interior wood; use water- or borax-based products