

# BEST PRACTICES



## Keep it Green When You Clean This Spring

### Carpet Cleaning

Dirty carpet wash water contains harmful pollutants such as soap, dirt, oil, grease, carpet fibers, heavy metals and other toxic chemicals. Make sure to dispose of the dirty wash water properly. If connected to a sanitary sewer system, you can dump the wash water down a sink, toilet, bathtub or shower. Make sure to filter larger debris out before dumping. Throw debris into the trash. **Do not dump dirty wash water down a drain if you are connected to a septic system; the wash water may harm your septic system.** If you are hiring a company, ensure they have a proper disposal plan.

### Cleaning Driveways and Sidewalks

Sweep driveways and sidewalks to remove debris instead of pressure washing or using a hose. Dispose of dirt and debris in the garbage. Cover vehicle fluid spills with kitty litter or other absorbent material and dispose of in the garbage. If you are going to use a hose or pressure washer, sweep first, then use the lowest setting possible. If possible, pressure wash with **water only**. Direct wash water (with or without soap) to a grassy or graveled area to allow the wash water to soak into the ground.

### Pressure Washing Houses and Garages

Pressure washing houses can cause paint to flake off. Cover the ground with tarps before pressure washing to help capture the paint flakes before the waste water enters the street or a storm drain. A shop vac can be used to vacuum up other flakes for disposal. If you have an older home, you may want to test your paint flakes first to find out if it has lead or other heavy metals, which may require that the paint flakes be disposed of as hazardous material at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center at 2418 Hogum Bay Road NE in Lacey.

### Washing Your Car

The best way to clean your car and keep local streams clean is to take it to a commercial car wash, where the water is cleaned and recycled on-site, and the grime is sent to the LOTT wastewater treatment plant. The next best option is to wash your car on the lawn or graveled area (not over a drinking well or septic system), so the wash water can soak into the ground.

If you are planning on holding a charity car wash fundraising event, contact your local Steam Team Coordinator to find a *Clean Cars, Clean Streams* approved charity car wash location. Stream Team will also lend you a *Clean Cars, Clean Streams* car wash kit, which includes buckets, sponges, spray nozzles, eco-friendly car wash soap and signs.

***Planning on holding a car wash fund raiser? The best way to raise money through charity car washing while protecting local waterways is through the sale of car wash tickets. Car wash tickets can be ordered with your organization's name imprinted on them. For more information go to [www.CharityCarWash.org](http://www.CharityCarWash.org)***

Source: Stream Team News, Spring 2013

