

# Vehicle Washing

## Business Pollution Prevention Fact Sheet

***If you wash vehicles on the street or a concrete driveway that drains to a stormwater drain you run the risk of being fined***



The accumulated impact of waste water from vehicle washing, can pose a significant threat to the health of our waterways, if allowed to enter the stormwater system. Many of the ingredients in detergents and solvents (including those labelled as biodegradable) can be toxic to aquatic animal and plant life, can promote algal and weed growth and reduce the diversity of life in our creeks, the Hunter River and ocean. In addition, the dirt and grime removed from vehicle surfaces contains pollutants such as oil, grease, heavy metals (e.g. lead, cadmium, chromium, copper and zinc), rubber and sediment. Sediment carries and transports the other pollutants through the stormwater system to downstream waterbodies.

Any waste water entering the stormwater system is an offence and may result in a \$4000 fine for individuals or a \$8000 fine for corporations or businesses under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*

Vehicle cleaning and washing activities should be confined to a bunded area where waste water is directed to the sewer, a collection pit, or treated and recycled using treatment equipment. If vehicle washing is a regular activity your business may need to install a permanent wash bay. Wash bays require approval from Hunter Water and building or other approvals from Council. Check before commencing any improvements so you are clear about requirements.

All detergents, degreasers, oil, grease and road grit washed off a vehicle must be collected and pre-treated prior to discharge to the sewer in accordance with a trade waste agreement with Hunter Water Corporation.

### Charity Car Washing Activities

Home or charity car washes should be carried out on a grassed or gravelled area away from stormwater drains or over a spill-safe mat from which all runoff can be collected for safe disposal.

## Further information

Newcastle City Council Ph: 4974 2000 [www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au)

Hunter Water Corporation Ph: 1300 657 657 [www.hunterwater.com.au](http://www.hunterwater.com.au)

Office of Environment & Heritage (EPA) Ph. 131 555

Email: [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au)

Website: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

Adapted from:

NSW Department of Environmental and Conservation "Car Wash Bays" Fact Sheet April 2002

SA Environment Protection Authority "Disposal of Soaps and Detergents" Fact Sheet April 2004

