Automobile Maintenance and Car Care - Tips for the Homeowner

KEEP THE STORM DRAINS CLEAN FOR THOSE DOWNSTREAM

Oil and grease can destroy fish gills and block oxygen from the fish, while other chemicals can have toxic effects.

Routine automobile maintenance can pollute streams, ponds, and rivers. This occurs when washing vehicles or if oil or other vehicle fluids leak onto paved areas. Storm water runoff from paved areas (roads, driveways, and parking areas) carries contaminants into streams, ponds, and rivers, harming aquatic life. Oil and grease can destroy fish gills and block oxygen from the fish, while other chemicals can have toxic effects. Here are some maintenance tips that will reduce water pollution:

Fluid Maintenance

- Change your oil and other lubricants regularly.
- Identify leaking fluids and repair promptly.
- Use a funnel and drip pan to contain spills during fluid changes.
- Drop off used oil at the Autocraft shop or AAFES gas station.
- Place drip pans under the spouts of liquid storage containers.

Cleaning

- Dry sweep garage floors instead of wet washing.
- Use nontoxic cleaning products, such as:
  - baking soda paste to clean battery terminals, chrome, wheels, and tires;
  - dishwashing soap or abrasive soap pads for tire cleaning; and
  - white vinegar with water to clean windows; dry with crumpled newspaper.

Vehicle Washing

- Wash vehicles at a car wash that recycles water, or use a bucket and sponge (not a running hose). This conserves water and minimizes runoff.

Spills

- Prepare a spill cleanup kit for use in your garage.
- Clean up spills immediately, using kitty litter, sawdust, or cornmeal.
- Dispose of waste material properly; call the environmental office for instructions.

For further information, contact the Installation's Environmental Branch at 767-2010.