

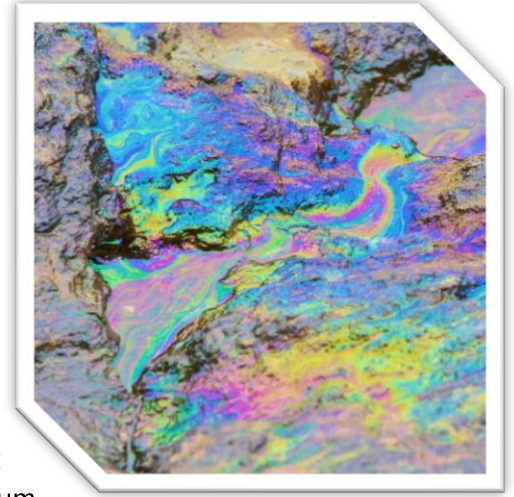
# Auto Fluids

# FACT SHEET

## WHERE WATER POLLUTION STARTS

More than 60% of water pollution comes from things like leaking fluid from cars, fertilizers and pesticides, and pet waste. All these sources add up to a big pollution problem. The biggest source of water pollution today is not industry – it's households like ours.

But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water. And it starts with realizing that our sewers and storm systems are separate. What goes into storm drains flows directly into our streams, lakes, rivers, and eventually the Puget Sound...**untreated.**



## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH AUTO FLUIDS?

Most auto fluids don't dissolve in water. They last a long time and stick to everything from sand to bird feathers. Oil and other petroleum products are toxic to people, wildlife, and plants. One pint of oil can make a slick larger than a football field. Rain washes the fluids that leak from our cars onto driveways, roads, and into storm drains.

## A FEW FACTS TO THINK ABOUT

- Oil, antifreeze, and brake fluids contain heavy metals that can harm aquatic wildlife. The oil from just one oil change can pollute up to a million gallons of water.
- Used motor oil is the largest single source of oil pollution in our lakes, streams, and rivers. Americans spill 180 million gallons of used oil each year into our waters. This is 16 times the amount the Exxon Valdez spilled in Alaska (the oil spill that killed over half a million birds and other wildlife in 1989).

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

**How can you use auto fluids and help keep our waters clean at the same time?**

- Stop drips. Check for oil leaks regularly and fix them promptly. Keep your car tuned to reduce oil use.
- Use ground cloths or drip pans beneath your vehicle if you have leaks or are doing engine work. Clean up spills immediately. Collect all used oil and other fluids in containers with tight fitting lids. Don't mix different engine fluids.
- Use cat litter to soak up leaked oil, and then throw it in the trash once dry.
- Never dispose of oil or other engine fluids down the storm drain, on the ground, or into a ditch. Dumping automotive fluids into storm drains is just like dumping the materials directly into a body of water.
- Recycle used motor oil and other car fluids. Some auto supply stores and gas stations will accept used oil, or you can visit the Wastemobile (see the Wastemobile schedule at [www.hazwastehelp.org](http://www.hazwastehelp.org)).
- Buy recycled (re-refined) motor oil to use in your car.

## LEARN MORE

Visit [fixcarleaks.org/](http://fixcarleaks.org/) to find out more about vehicle fluids and pollution prevention.