

## How Can You Help?

Pollution from storm water runoff could be greatly reduced if each person living in our region would do just a few easy things to prevent it causes. Keeping vehicle fluids, yard debris, litter, and other materials out of the storm drain system is an important first step. Your part might seem small, but every little bit adds up to make a significant difference.

- Read and follow package label directions when using yard chemicals or household cleaners. Save money by only using the amount you really need.
- Fix or repair leaks on your vehicles and other equipment. Collect and recycle used oil.
- Properly dispose of or donate old paint.
- Capture rain water from your roof or downspouts for watering the lawn and inedible plants.
- Secure your loads when transporting items or materials before driving on roadways.
- Participate in Household Hazardous Waste Days to properly dispose of old cleaners, solvents, batteries, paint and other chemical waste.
- Schedule an educational program for your organization, event, or neighborhood association.



**If you see water pollution,  
unlawful dumping or an  
illicit connection to the  
storm drain system; contact  
The City of Bessemer  
Storm Water Management  
Department at  
205-424-4060.**



**Bessemer City Hall**  
Storm Water Management Dept  
1700 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue N  
Bessemer, AL 35020

Phone (205)424-4060  
[bessemeral.org](http://bessemeral.org)

## Vehicle & Equipment Care Management



**City of Bessemer**  
Storm Water Management  
Educational Services



## Care and Maintenance

Care and maintenance of vehicles and other motorized equipment is important in keeping them in good working order and protecting your purchases. Many activities associated with cleaning, changing fluids, and repairing cars and other equipment have the potential to contribute to storm water (rain water) runoff pollution. Using common sense and good housekeeping practices in these activities can help protect water quality in local rivers, creeks, streams, and lakes.

Storm water on streets, parking lots, and driveways comes in contact with oil, grease and other fluids that have dripped from cars and equipment: asbestos from brake linings; zinc from tires; and organic compounds and metals from spilled fuel, and carries it into storm drains. This untreated storm water is called polluted runoff. Polluted runoff flows through the storm drain system and directly into local waterways where it can contaminate water and kill fish and other wildlife.



*Oil and other fluids leaked or spilled on paved areas carried by storm water into the storm drain system.*

## Leaks and Drips

A small leak from your vehicle may not seem like a big deal, but when each car in a large parking lot drips just one drop of fluid, the cumulative negative effect on water quality can be enormous.

- Routinely monitor for leaks and use drip pans to collect fluid until the leak is fixed.
- Follow recommended maintenance.
- Carefully fuel to avoid drips or spills.

## Oil and Fluid Change

Responsibly changing the oil and other fluids in your vehicle is easy to do with a little planning and proper equipment.



*An estimated 180 million gallons of used oil is improperly disposed of each year!*

- Use a proper drop cloth as well as a drip pan large enough to capture the oil or fluid as it drains.
- Take the filled containers to an oil change or retail facility that accepts used oil for recycling.
- Used oil filters and other fluids are recyclable at some auto parts and service centers.

## Spill and Waste Cleanup

Fluid spills and improperly discarded materials can enter our local waterways if they come in contact with storm water. Common waste generated by residents performing their own automobile maintenance include: solvents; antifreeze; brake fluid and lining; batteries; motor oils; fuels and lubricating grease.

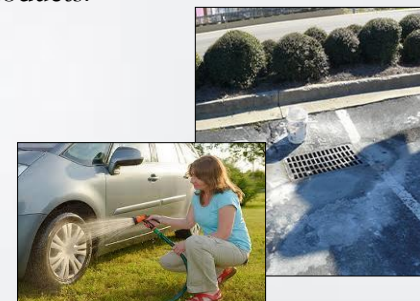
Here are a few ways to quickly and effectively respond to spills and properly discard wastes:

- Keep absorbent material such as cat litter on hand in case of spills.
- Sprinkle absorbent material over the spill, wait until the spill is absorbed, and sweep up.
- Properly dispose of the material according to product label.
- Avoid using water to clean up the work area.
- Never pour any liquid waste down a storm drain or in a roadside gutter or ditch.

## Storm Water Pollution Causes

Whenever possible, wash your car at a commercial car wash. These facilities have equipment that collects wash water for re-use and separates out oil and grease for proper disposal. When washing vehicles and other equipment at home, following these tips will help prevent the wash water from entering the storm drain system and harming water quality:

- Wash vehicles and other equipment on grassy areas rather than in your driveway or street.
- Use organic or other non-toxic cleaning products.



*Washing the car on a grassy area allows wash water to soak into the ground, not enter a storm drain.*

## Product Purchase and Storage

Buying and storing products can be responsible and safe when you follow a few easy steps:

- Store products so they are not exposed to storm water.
- Keep opened products tightly capped and upright to avoid spills.
- Purchase only what is necessary for the job to avoid creating the need for proper disposal of leftovers.