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Vehicle Maintenance and Storm Water Pollution Prevention

Doing your own vehicle maintenance is good for your wallet and, if done properly, will not cause storm water pollution. By performing vehicle maintenance carefully, you help prevent contaminated water runoff that can leave deposits of heavy metals, grease, oil, antifreeze, cleaning liquids, and other vehicle fluids in streets, storm drains, and washes. These contaminants can collect on roads and soil surfaces, polluting our desert environment.

You can prevent the contamination of storm water resulting from car or truck maintenance by doing the following:

- perform work in designated covered areas;
- check often for leaks and spills; and
- contain and clean up any spills immediately.

Repairing engines and changing or replacing fluids outdoors can be a significant source of storm water pollution. It is best to do repairs under a covered area and on a paved surface to make it easier to clean up spills. The following are some suggestions that may help to minimize adverse environmental impacts from vehicle maintenance:

- Use drip pans or absorbent pads during maintenance work involving fluids;
- Ensure ready access to a stockpile of spill cleanup materials;
- Use absorbent materials on small spills; remove the absorbent materials promptly and dispose of properly;
- Do not allow excessive buildup of oil and grease on vehicles;
- For long term projects, consider using a portable tent or cover;
- Segregate and recycle wastes, such as greases, used oil or oil filters, antifreeze, cleaning solutions, automotive batteries, and hydraulic and transmission fluids;
- Properly dispose of used oils, fluids, lubricants, and spill cleanup materials;
- Do not place used oil in a dumpster or pour it into a storm drain or wash; and
- Repair fluid and oil leaks immediately.

Oil, oil filters, gas, diesel, fluids [transmission, radiator, brake], and batteries can be disposed of at Tucson/Pima County Household Hazardous Waste, 2440 Sweetwater Drive (Prince & I-10), Fridays & Saturdays: 8am-Noon. For other times and locations call 520-888-6947.

For more information about storm water pollution prevention, call Pima County Department of Environmental Quality at 740-3340.