For more information

For more information or technical assistance, call the Washington State Department of Ecology in Olympia at (360) 407-6600 or contact one of our regional offices:

Northwest Regional Office:
Bellevue (425) 649-7000

Southwest Regional Office:
Lacey (360) 407-6300

Central Regional Office:
Yakima (509) 575-2490

Eastern Regional Office:
Spokane (509) 456-2926

To learn more about water conservation, call your local water utility.

For more information, call your county Cooperative Extension office, your county environmental health department or your Conservation District.

When you're finished with this brochure, please pass it along to a friend.

Cover concept courtesy of *New York State Water Week Campaign*
Other illustrations by *Tim Schlender*

Caring for our water is everybody's business.

Tips to help you protect water at home

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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Do you know where your water comes from, and where it goes?

Clean, abundant water is one of our state's greatest treasures, whether it comes from the ground or from lakes, streams, rivers or coastal waters. We can't take it for granted.

As population grows, demand for water increases. So does the potential for pollution.

Without realizing it, ordinary people can

❖ waste water

❖ pollute it - or

❖ increase the amount of runoff.

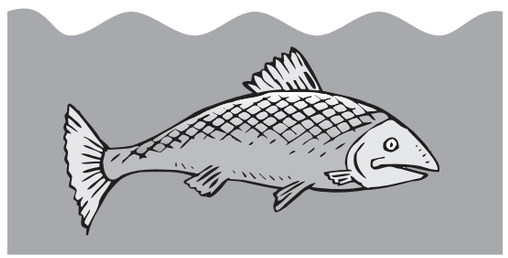
Our everyday activities may send oil, pesticides, fertilizers and sediment into nearby waters.

To keep our water clean—and to make sure we have enough to go around—everyone needs to help. This pamphlet offers tips on reducing water use and runoff, and keeping pollutants out of the water around our homes.

Tips for your lawn & garden

There can be too much of a good thing. Used excessively, pesticides and fertilizers can be washed from yards into waterways and ground water. Pesticides can be toxic to fish and people. Fertilizers can encourage rapid growth of plants and algae in lakes and streams. Overwatering can cause disease in plants.

❖ Use gardening chemicals only when needed, and use non-toxic products whenever possible.



❖ Apply fertilizers or pesticides when there's no chance of rain. Buy and mix only enough to do the job and always follow instructions.

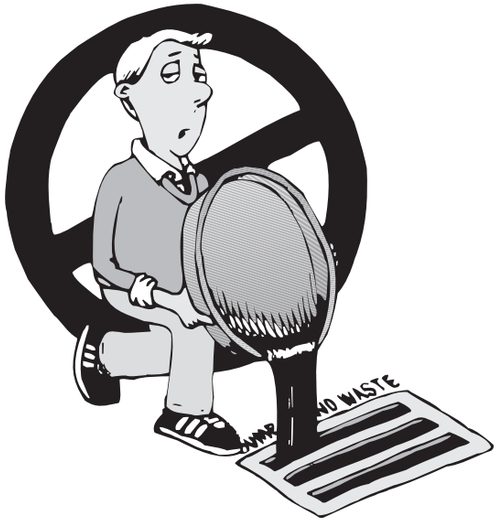
❖ Compost your yard wastes. Keep grass clippings out of ravines and waterways, where they will pollute the water when they disintegrate.

❖ When you're watering, make sure the water goes *where* you want it, *when* you need it. Adjust your schedule to the weather and avoid watering the pavement.

❖ Try not to water during the heat of the day when evaporation is more likely, or when it's windy.

Tips for your sidewalk & drive

Runoff from your yard and driveway flows down the street, into a storm drain, through the storm sewer system, and directly into waterways — without treatment. Sometimes it gets into the ground water through catch basins or dry wells. Leaking oil from automobiles is a major cause of water pollution. Soil, grit and debris washed from paved surfaces often carry harmful chemicals.



❖ Recycle used oil - never dump it down a storm drain or pour it on the ground. Call 1-800-RECYCLE for recycling locations.

❖ When hand-watering or washing your car, use a hose with a shutoff nozzle.

❖ Wash your car with non-toxic, low-phosphate soap, and use water sparingly.

❖ Sweep your walks and driveway instead of hosing them down.

Tips to control runoff

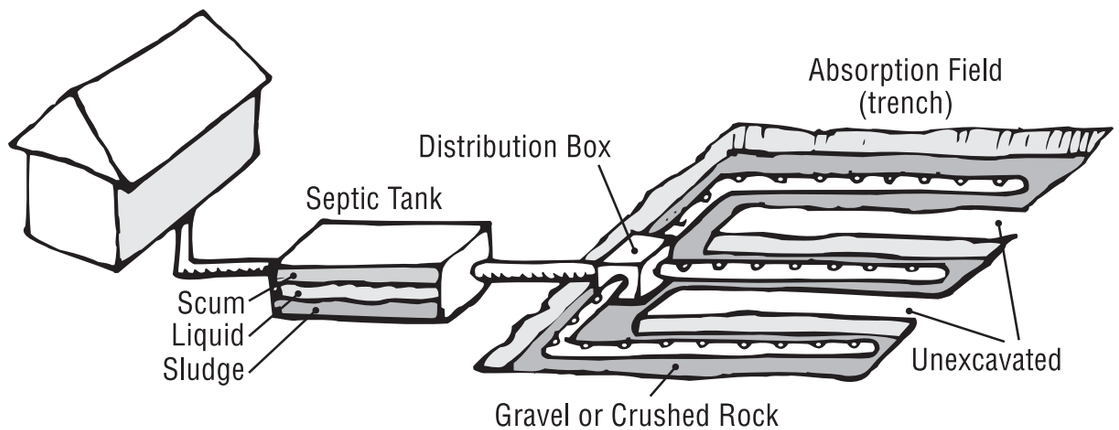
Trees, shrubs and other vegetation help rain soak into the soil. Plants filter pollutants from runoff, keep streambanks and slopes from eroding, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife.

❖ When you're landscaping or building on a new site, work with Mother Nature. Leave as much existing vegetation as possible, especially along waterways. Native plants usually need less care and water than ornamental varieties.

❖ Plant more trees, shrubs and ground covers. Minimize impervious surfaces like concrete.

❖ Control animal access to streams. Livestock eat the vegetation that protects the streambanks. Their hooves can cause further erosion, and their waste degrades water quality.

❖ Pick up your pet's wastes. Runoff can carry pollution from them into lakes and streams.



Tips for your septic system

A septic system that's working properly will save you money and last many years. A malfunctioning system can cost you a bundle and pollute ground water.

❖ Be careful what you flush. Don't flush oil, plastic, diapers, strong household chemicals or anything that won't decompose in water.

❖ Have your tank inspected every year. It may need to be pumped every three to five years. Keep good records, for yourself and the next owner.

❖ Conserve water. Using more than you need will shorten the life of your system.

Especially avoid using a lot of water within a short period of time.

A few more tips

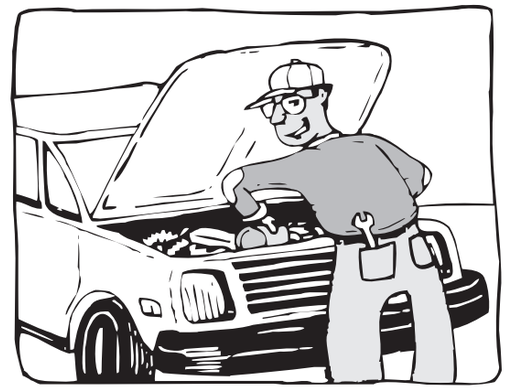
❖ When you're washing clothes or dishes, only run full loads.

❖ Install faucet aerators and shower heads that restrict the flow.

❖ Partially fill the sink to rinse produce or dishes, instead of letting the water run.

❖ Buy low-phosphate cleaners and detergents. Phosphates act as a fertilizer and increase algae and aquatic weeds in waterways. When these plants die, they rob the water of oxygen and fish may die.

❖ Keep your vehicle maintained. Oil from leaky crankcases and fall-out from exhaust can end up on roadways and be washed into water bodies.



❖ Call 1-800-RECYCLE for information about recycling and disposal of chemicals, oil, paint and other household products.

❖ If you have a well, protect the area around it from chemicals and animals, which may pollute the ground water.