

Take Care of Your Car to Protect Waterways

Fix Leaks, Clean Up Spills, and Dispose of Auto Fluids Correctly

Excerpt: Since automotive fluid leaks cause water pollution, keeping your car in good shape protects local waterways.



Car Fluid Leaks and the Environment

A leaking car is bad news. The first reason is obvious—your car needs those fluids to function. A leak can cause serious problems for your vehicle and can sometimes make it unsafe to drive. Second, when automotive fluids leave your car, they go into the environment. Leaks on the road or your driveway can pollute nearby rivers and streams. The next rainfall will wash leaked fluids into storm drains and send the chemicals directly into waterways.

For a working car, for your safety, and for clean water, keep your car properly maintained. Fix leaks as soon as you notice them. The day after taking your car in for service, check underneath the vehicle for any remaining leaks.



Cleaning Up Leaks and Spills

If your car is leaking, you'll need to clean up any pools of fluids beneath it. Motor oil, transmission fluid, brake fluid, antifreeze, and power steering fluid have the potential to leak from your vehicle. Wear gloves when working with these chemicals since many can be harmful to your skin.

To clean up most leaked or spilled fluids, soak up as much as possible using a commercial oil-absorbing product (like Oil-Dri), sawdust, non-clumping kitty litter that is usually made of clay, or baking soda. After a day or two, remove the soaked material and apply more material if needed. Scrub the area with dish soap or laundry detergent to help remove an oil stain.

Automotive fluids are dangerous to people and the environment. These auto fluid-soaked materials shouldn't be thrown in the regular trash or swept out into the street. They are considered Household Hazardous Waste and have specific requirements for disposal.

Disposing of Automotive Fluids

If you have fluid-soaked material used for cleaning up a spill or change automotive fluids at home, you'll need to properly dispose of used fluids at a Household Hazardous Waste facility or a business that accepts used fluids.

The nearest Household Hazardous Waste facility is in Naperville, IL at 156 Fort Hill Drive. It is open every Saturday and Sunday from 9 am to 2 pm. Find more information at

<https://www.naperville.il.us/services/garbage-and-recycling/household-hazardous-waste-facility/>



Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off Location in Naperville (Source: Google Maps)

You can often find a list of local businesses that offer recycling services on municipal websites. For example, [DuPage County's Recycling Guide](#) and [Will County Green's database](#) list businesses that recycle automotive fluids and other products. You can also call your local auto repair garage to find out if they accept these fluids.

Remember that these products should never be dumped down drains in your home or storm drains. These chemicals are harmful to us and the environment. Proper disposal protects our water resources.

Not only does car maintenance protect your car—it protects the environment too!