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## Nonpoint Source Pollution Education: Motor Oil

When your car leaks oil on the street, remember ... it's not just leaking oil on the street.

Leaking oil goes from car to street. Then it gets washed from the street into the storm drain and into our lakes, rivers, and streams. Now imagine the number of cars in the area and you can imagine the amount of oil that finds its way from leaky gaskets into our water. So please, fix oil leaks.



Clean water is important to all of us.

It's up to all of us to make it happen. In recent years, sources of water pollution like industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced. Now, more than 60 percent of water pollution comes from things like cars leaking oil, fertilizers from farms and gardens, and failing septic tanks. All these sources add up to a big pollution problem. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water too-and that adds up to a pollution solution!

**Why do we need clean water?**

Having clean water is of primary importance for our health and economy. Clean water

provides recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, drinking water, and adds beauty to our landscape. All of us benefit from clean water-and all of us have a role in getting and keeping our lakes, rivers, streams, marine, and ground waters clean.

#### What's the problem with motor oil?

Oil doesn't dissolve in water. It lasts a long time and sticks to everything from beach sand to bird feathers. Oil and petroleum products are toxic to people, wildlife, and plants. One quart of motor oil can pollute 250,000 gallons of water, and one gallon of gasoline can pollute 750,000 gallons of water! Oil that leaks from our cars onto roads and driveways is washed into storm drains, and then usually flows directly into a lake or stream. Used motor oil is the largest single source of oil pollution in lakes, streams, and rivers. Americans spill 180 million gallons of used oil each year into the nation's waters. This is 16 times the amount spilled by the Exxon Valdez in Alaska!

#### Clean Water Tips: How can you maintain your vehicle and help keep waters clean?

- Check for oil leaks from your vehicle regularly and fix them promptly!
- Never dispose of oil or other engine fluids down the storm drain, on the ground, or into a ditch. Recycle used motor oil. For more information on recycling, contact the closest [MassDEP Regional Office](#).
- Buy recycled oil to use in your car.
- Use ground cloths or drip pans beneath your vehicle if you have leaks or are doing engine work. Clean up spills!

#### For More Information

To find out more about the impacts of nonpoint source pollution and what you can do to prevent it, call the numbers listed below.

[Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation](#): 617-626-1250

[Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection](#): 617-292-5500

[Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game](#): 617-626-1540

[Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management](#): 617-626-1200

[Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources](#): 617-626-1700

[US Environmental Protection Agency-New England](#): 617-918-1111

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