

Preventing Pollution from Oil, Gas and Antifreeze

Potential and Potent Pollutants

Automotive fluids like oil, gas, transmission oil and brake fluid are potent water pollutants. Oil itself is hazardous to the environment and used oils often contain toxic substances such as lead, cadmium and benzene. One drop of motor oil can pollute up to 50 gallons of fresh water. Contamination from a one car oil change can pollute up to one million gallons of water.

Antifreeze is less toxic to lakes and streams, but even a small amount of an engine coolant containing ethylene glycol or propylene glycol is poisonous to pets and wildlife. Used antifreeze may be harmful since it is often contaminated with acids, heavy metals, oil and gasoline.

For this reason, never let automotive fluids flow directly or indirectly into storm sewer openings. The contaminants will be carried untreated to lakes and streams. In fact, it is illegal to put anything but clean water into Worthington's storm sewers.

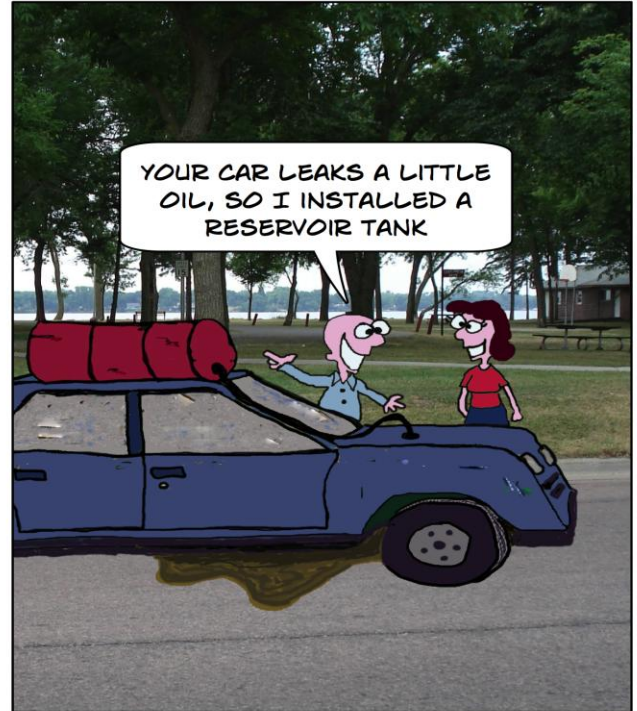
Fix Leaks

Even fluids leaking from cars one drop at a time are potential pollutants. A persistently leaky car may drip gallons of petroleum products onto streets over time. Many leaks are simple and cheap to repair. These should be fixed as soon as possible.

Clean up Spills

Spilled or leaked automotive fluids should be absorbed using sawdust or a clay based material like cat litter. Small amounts of these materials may be swept up and disposed of in your household trash container. Larger amounts should be taken to the Nobles County Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

Do not use a hose to wash spilled petroleum products from streets and driveways. The pollutants will likely be



carried by the storm sewer system to the nearest pond, lake or stream.

Recycle

Used motor oil should be stored in leak-proof plastic containers and taken during business hours to the Schaaap Sanitation Recycling Center. The recycling center is located on Highway 60 south in Worthington. Many local automobile service businesses also accept used oil.

Contaminated oil, brake fluid, power steering fluid, transmission oil and many other automotive products may be disposed of free at the Nobles County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility.

Small amounts of antifreeze may be poured into your home's sanitary sewer system. Antifreeze contaminated with gasoline or oil must be taken to the county HHW Facility for disposal. If you have questions, contact the HHW facility at (507) 295-5322.