

# How do vehicles pollute the Bay? Let's count the ways:

## 1. Tailpipe emissions

Tailpipe emissions go up in the air. . . but all too soon, many tiny particles are back down on the street, waiting for rain to wash them into storm drains and on into the Bay.



### What comes out of the tailpipe?

Exhaust contains chemicals long known to impair air quality and human health:

- Carbon monoxide
- Particulates
- Nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds (VOCs)—the ingredients that form smog

Chemicals in exhaust also cause water pollution:

- Toxic organic compounds such as dioxins
- Mercury
- Other heavy metals

### What can you do about it?

Make sure an auto shop keeps your car tuned up so the engine burns cleaner.



## 2. Tires

As the tread wears down, pollution builds up on the roadway. Tires contain zinc, cadmium, and a host of other substances you wouldn't want to drink or feed to your goldfish.

### What can you do about it?

The best way to reduce pollution due to tire wear on streets and freeways is to *drive less*.

## 3. Soap and dirty carwash water, wax, and detailing materials

Dirty, soapy water is on its way to the nearest creek when you wash your car on the street—or in a driveway that slopes to the gutter. Even biodegradable soap is harmful to creek life!

### What can you do about it?

Take your car to a commercial carwash. Carwashes are best because they recycle their water, and finally send it through the sewer to the wastewater treatment plant. Get carwash discounts at [mywatershedwatch.org](http://mywatershedwatch.org)



If you must wash your car at home, wash it on a lawn or unpaved area. Use a bucket of soapy water and pour it down a sink or toilet when you're done.

For more information about what you can do to help prevent water pollution, check out our website:

[www.cleanbay.org](http://www.cleanbay.org)

## 4. Leaking automotive fluids

Leaking oil, antifreeze, and other automotive fluids such as brake fluid, battery acid, and grease: All of these fluids contain toxic organics and metals. If they leak onto the street as you drive or when you're parked, you can bet they're headed for the storm drains, and on to local creeks and the Bay!

### What can you do about it?

Check your parking spot routinely for evidence of leaks. If your car or truck is leaking, have it repaired promptly.



## 5. Brake pads

Brake pads are designed to wear away little by little, each time you slow down or stop. Many brake pads contain copper, which is highly toxic to aquatic life at the base of the food web. Brake pad dust is the largest source of copper in the Bay!

### What can you do about it?

When it's time to replace your brake pads, inquire about pads made from materials that contain little or no copper. Some parts stores have information about brake pads' copper content, although manufacturers are not currently required to list ingredients.



## 6. Used oil and coolant, disposed of improperly

Oil is high in zinc; radiator fluid contains several other heavy metals. Pollution from these metals is a big problem for our creeks and the Bay.

### What can you do about it?

If you change your own oil, use a funnel and a pan that catches all the drips. Recycle that used oil curbside, or at a city recycling center or certified collection center. For information, call 1-888-BAYWISE.

If you flush your radiator, collect all the fluid and take it to a household hazardous waste collection event or center.



### Regional Water Quality Control Plant

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The Regional Water Quality Control Plant is operated by the City of Palo Alto for the East Palo Alto Sanitary District, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Stanford.