



Water-Conserving Tips for Washing Your Car



Washing Your Vehicles at the Car Wash



Patronizing a **car wash** that either **recycles water** on site or sends the used water (grey water) to a treatment plant is often the **most water efficient** way to wash your vehicle. **Washing your vehicle at home** can use up to 148 gallons of water or more for one washing, especially if you leave the hose running without an automatic shut off nozzle.

Here are some tips and technologies that will help you save water while washing your car, as well as information on the types of car washes available:



Water Use in Three Types of Professional Car Washes

	Gallons per Vehicle	Evaporation & Carryout (%)
Self-serve	12.3	19.8
In-bay	72.5	32.8
Conveyor	43.8	16.7

Table from International Car Wash Association, 2000

1. Self-service car washes:

Use roughly **12 gallons per vehicle** in desert regions. The number of gallons lost to evaporation and carryout (water that is still on the vehicle at time of exit) equal about 20% of the water used.

2. In-bay automatic car washes:

Use roughly **72.5 gallons per vehicle** by rotating the washing equipment around a stationary vehicle. It loses 33% of the water used due to evaporation and carryout.

3. Convey or driven automatic car washes:

Use **44 gallons per vehicle** and loses 17% of that to evaporation and carryout. This type of automatic car wash is recommended above In-Bay automatic car washes.

For More Water Conservation Information:

www.azwater.gov/conservation

Statewide Conservation Office
 (602) 771-8534

Phoenix AMA
 (602) 771-8585

Pinal AMA
 (520) 836-4857

Prescott AMA
 (928) 778-7202

Santa Cruz AMA
 (520) 761-1814

Tucson AMA
 (520) 770-3800

Things to Look for at the Car Wash

- Recycles water and uses recycled water
- Low flow spray-wand nozzles at self-serve car washes
- Positive shut-off valves on hand-held spray wands

Note: Some establishments, not all, display **signs** or **association logos** that will help identify them as a water conserving car wash.



Tips for Washing Your Vehicle at Home



Although it is more water efficient to wash your vehicle at a professional car wash, here are some ways to save water at home:

If possible, use new [waterless car-wash products](#) that are currently on the market. There are multiple types and brands to choose from, such as:

- ◆ [Spray-on waterless formulas](#) you wipe away instead of rinse
- ◆ [Waxes](#) with powerful cleaning properties
- ◆ [Car dusters](#) which lift dust off your vehicle [without scratching the paint](#)

Most waterless car wash products can be found online, however some can be found in automotive stores.

- If you must wash with water, use a [bucket and sponge](#) or towel. Rinse quickly with a hose at the end.



- Equip your hose with an [automatic shut-off valve](#) (also known as a positive shut-off valve) so that water will only run when it is needed.

- Wash your vehicle on [dirt or grass](#). Avoid pavement where water will just evaporate or run into the street. Soil acts as a natural filtration system for water. The soap will not harm your lawn. In fact, the lawn will help keep the soapy water out of the storm drain where it could possibly contaminate the water.



This fact sheet has been developed by the Arizona Department of Water Resources' Statewide Water Conservation Program in an effort to strengthen the culture of conservation throughout Arizona.