



Personal Vehicle Maintenance: Do it!



Is a small leak really a big problem?

Yes. It's not that the oil leaks *onto* the ground; it's where it goes *after it hits* the ground. It's possible to stop a small oil leak in its tracks by absorbing the oil so it does not have an opportunity to travel. On the other hand, if your vehicle is leaking (with or without your knowledge), you've likely left oil spots *everywhere* you've driven. These leaks are eventually washed into storm drains by rain. This is when your leaky vehicle becomes a liability to GSFC, local streams, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. In his book *Turning the Tide*, Tom Horton stresses that "urban stormwater runoff" is perhaps the "leading cause of degradation of the Bay's watershed." You can prevent leaks easily by maintaining your car: check your fluid levels regularly and follow your vehicle's maintenance schedule.

What should I do if I discover a spill?

Don't just walk away! We're NASA; we'll find you. GSFC is bound by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Oil Pollution Prevention regulations. We are legally responsible to minimize the potential to pollute. Upon discovery of a spill on campus, the person reporting must contact 911 from a GSFC line, 301-286-9111 from an outside line (cell phone), or

the Facility Operations Center (FOC) from a GSFC-issued radio.

The FOC will then notify the appropriate personnel to address the spill. The spill will be managed to lessen negative impacts to the surrounding environment. By reporting spills quickly, you help minimize the extent of the spill, and the cost of labor, cleanup and disposal of spilled materials. Unreported spills can travel a long distance and make the cleanup a lot more difficult and expensive. Just remember: you call, we respond!



This is not an appropriate response to a spill. Call 911 instead!



GSFC's Environmental Team managing an oil spill. For every reported spill, time and resources are taken away from current projects to manage it. This imposes additional costs to NASA and strains GSFC's operational budget. This is an example of a spill that wasn't reported in a timely manner and was spread all over the parking lot by passing vehicles.

Please consult the sources below for information regarding oil spills/oil pollution:

GPR 8500.5, *Water Management*: <http://gdms.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

Horton, Tom. *Turning the Tide*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2003

Oil Pollution Prevention Regulation Overview:
<http://www.epa.gov/oem/content/lawsregs/opprover.htm>