

Antifreeze is essential to our cold weather travel, but it also presents a potential problem. Just a few drops of antifreeze carelessly spilled on a driveway or street can harm the environment and endanger the health of neighborhood pets.

These puddles, even when quite small, not only harm neighborhood pets, but also destroy vegetation and fish living in area streams and lakes, such as the Blacks Run and Newman Lake. Antifreeze has a high Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) which depletes the oxygen needed for fish, plants and other animals to live, disrupting the ecosystem.

When it rains, water washes over streets, parking lots and driveways and flows directly down the nearest storm drain. The storm water runoff sweeps up everything in its path including leaves, litter, lawn chemicals, pet waste, garbage and puddles of antifreeze.

The runoff travels through the storm drains and empties into the concrete "channels" that lead from Blacks run, to Cooks Creek, to the North River, to the South Fork Shenandoah, to the Shenandoah River, to the Potomac River, and eventually to the Chesapeake Bay.

It is important to properly dispose of used antifreeze, which has picked up lead and other materials from the engine and radiator. The City of Harrisonburg encourages proper disposal of antifreeze. Please visit the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for information on Used Motor Oil, Oil Filters and Antifreeze Collection Sites or call your local Auto Parts Store or Auto Dealer.

If you change your own antifreeze, make sure all spills are thoroughly cleaned up.