



*Be Car Care Aware*TM

When Your Car Says, “Wash Me, Please”

(NAPSA)—It’s definitely time to clean your car when someone writes “wash me” on the surface.

Even if your car hasn’t reached that point, a good cleaning of the inside and outside prevents the buildup of damaging chemicals and dirt, reduces the potential for rust from road salt and helps ensure the visibility needed for safe driving, according to the Car Care Council.

The first step is to remove the clutter from inside the car, including items that have accumulated in the trunk that can add extra weight and reduce gas mileage. Once this is done, thoroughly clean and vacuum the inside and wash the windows.

When washing the outside, make sure to include the tires, wheels and the underside of the fenders to eliminate any road salt or grime. The Council recommends cleaning the wheels and tires with a mitt and using a separate mitt to wash the body. This will avoid contaminating the vehicle’s paint with debris from the wheels and tires.

The body of the vehicle should be washed using a product sold specifically for cars. Starting at the top, wash one section at a time, thoroughly rinsing away the soap as you go.

Work your way down toward the front, sides and rear of the

vehicle. Clean the fenders and bumpers last, since they will have the most dirt and grime that can contaminate the wash mitt.

The car should get a final rinse by removing the spray nozzle from the hose and letting the water cascade down the surfaces of the vehicle. To avoid water spots, dry the vehicle with a chamois or other product made for drying.

The last step is to wax the car according to the manufacturer’s instructions for application. Waxing should be done out of direct sunlight and every six months. It goes a long way toward protecting the vehicle’s finish and makes subsequent washes easier.

If you identify any stone chips, rust or other problem spots while washing your vehicle, the Council suggests having these taken care of immediately to prevent further damage.

Keeping your vehicle clean not only protects your valuable investment, it can foster a sense of pride and accomplishment. It’s a task that takes very little money or effort, but has huge returns.

The Car Care Council is the source of information for the Be Car Care Aware consumer education campaign, which promotes the benefits of regular vehicle care. For more information, visit www.carcare.org.