

May 18, 2004

3667 Bottle Bay Road  
Sagle, ID 83860

**Subject: Car washes**

Dear friends and racers,

So I bet you're saying, "Hey, what's this!?! This sure is a big letter about how to wash cars...." Well, after four years of running the best car wash in town, we've learned some lessons. This letter might be helpful to refresh those of you who have worked with us before, and explain things to the "new guys."

Car washes are VOLUNTARY. The profit belongs to the racers, with the exception of one team car wash. We do, however, ask that you commit to dates in advance.

**Some basics -**

- The car wash will start at 9AM and extend to the scheduled end time of 3PM. If customers continue to arrive and the workers feel like staying later, they may. Sometimes we are still turning folks away at 4:15PM. The big point here is that we will not close early just because there's been a lull in the action. The minute we start modifying end-times we'll be answering the "When is this over?" questions from the kids. Those individual racers/parents who wish to start late or end early may do so, but please coordinate this in advance with the person in charge. Naturally, weather takes precedence over all of the above.
- A maximum of five racers split the profits on any given weekend.
- Younger racers (12 and under) must be accompanied by a working adult. If a teenager doesn't carry his/her weight, we will invite a parent the next time.
- The racers should bring some snacks and beverages along. We work hard and kids need something to munch on. There is no real "lunch hour" so workers must snack when the opportunity arises.
- The racers should bring some extra clothes (especially in June.) At a minimum, everyone should have a jacket or sweater.
- The doctor on duty at the site is entitled to a free car wash.

**Managing the car wash** – One family is in charge of each car wash. There are a few extra things to take care of as follows:

- Call everyone and ensure you have enough folks. If short-handed, call me and I'll work replacements. You can't afford to be understaffed.
- Pick-up the car washing kit from me on Thursday. The kit includes 20 small washing towels, 30+ large drying towels, six buckets, three tire brushes, three bug brushes, a hose splitter, two spare nozzles, hammer and nails, duct tape, box cutters, string for balloons, step ladder and four large signs. Please return the kit complete with all towels washed and dried for the next car wash.
- In the Spring and Fall, there will also be a propane stove and tank to heat water.

- Each team must bring the following, which is not included in the kit: car wash kit: soap (buy the real stuff), balloons, two long hoses with good nozzles, money box or envelope and two water heating pots (during cooler weather.)
- Have a sign-in sheet. Everyone should try to arrive by 8:45 AM to help with set-up. Pay starts at 9 AM. At the end of the day the car wash leader will pay pro-rata shares for the time spent by each racer. Here's an example of how to divide the money. Assume earned \$382 at this car wash. We split the money based upon time spent at the car wash. When we totaled the time spent by all the children (parents weren't part of the equation), I came up with 28.5 hours. This equated to 57 half-hours. I then divided the \$382 by 57 (\$6.70) and multiplied that figure times the number of \_ hours each camper worked. The profit break-out was:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Profit</b>
#1	5.5	\$38.65
#2	5.5	\$38.65
#3	6	\$40.20
#4	6	\$40.20
#5	5.5	\$38.65

The math is simpler now, since we only allow five racers per car wash.

#### **Setting-up the car wash –**

- The manager should arrive about 8:40 AM.
- Unload and get the water heating (cold weather)
- Get all of the hoses set and buckets full BEFORE putting up the signs
- Organize into three car washing teams. Ensure there is someone tall in every team. Ensure there is an adult in every team. Team assignments last all day. This is an important concept, both for the purpose of taking breaks and to ensure work is equally distributed. Sometimes best friends work best if on different teams.
- Open at 9 AM (or earlier if ready).

#### **During the car wash -**

- Constantly clean and refill water buckets. Dirty water ruins cars.
- Keep hot water boiling.
- Manage towels. You will run out of towels unless you pay attention to drying them. Keep them in sunny areas, spread them out and suspended them on bushes or walls.
- Make sure only the tire buckets are used for tires.
- KIDS DO NOT GET TO MAN THE HOSES! This is an important concept. If this team had their way the adults would wash cars while they supervised and had water fights (right kids?).
- Likewise, only adults may use bug brushes and scrub pads. We've had instances of modified paint jobs, which later required rubbing compound and wax. Always ask the owner before using a car brush.
- Every car is greeted by one of our racers (The "melt their hearts" concept).
- Each car is thoroughly inspected. We like the kids to inspect, that way they learn about quality. The inspector then tells the customer that the job is done (more melted hearts).

- When a team isn't washing a car, they stand on the corner waving towels and generating business.
- Everyone works. Even if one adult finds it easier to do all of the work, the children in that team must be fully engaged. Otherwise the unfortunates assigned to a different work group rightfully feel as though there is inequity.
- Teach the kids how to wash a car. Even if they only do a small part of the car, not having to redo their work is huge!
- We may use the medical center restrooms. Please tell the kids not to take rubber gloves from the bathrooms.
- The medical center flowers are for smelling and looking at... not for harvesting.

**Clean-up** – We have a great relationship with Doctor Rust and don't want to end it. They expect the place to be clean at the end of the day.

- Hose off the entire parking area. There are a few spots that collect water and there's not much we can do about it.
- Pick-up all trash in both the work area and front yard.
- Roll and stack all of the hoses.
- Collect all signs. Ensure all balloon and string residue is removed as well.

**Money management** –

- Start the day with at least \$20 in change.
- The average donation (in case someone asks) has been \$5, but we never complain.
- Keep the money in a single envelope on the break table.
- Never let more than \$60 accumulate in the envelope. I am constantly purging money and relocating it to the car.
- Every racer should be paid before leaving the car wash, unless he/she leaves early. That means the manager delegates clean-up supervision and becomes an accountant.

QUALITY, QUALITY, QUALITY!!! About 75% of our customers are repeat visitors. We get huge tips because of the job we do. One poor job undermines the entire operation.

Have fun,!

Shep Snow