

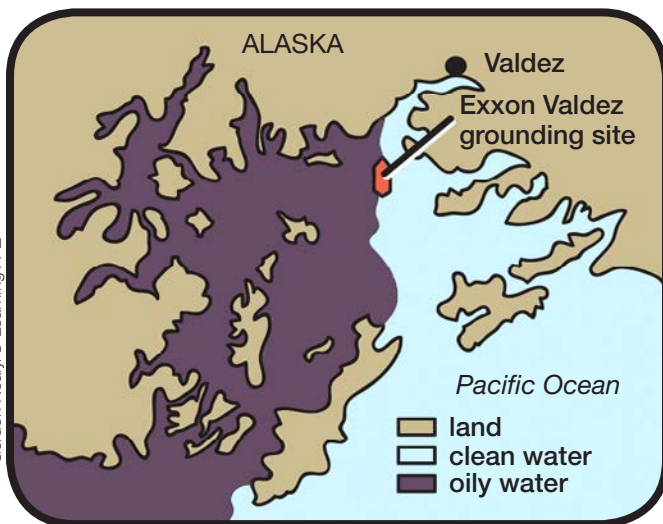
Water Pollution

Water **pollution** comes from many sources. Air pollutants from factories and motor vehicles mix with falling rain. This mixing creates a weak acid. The acid can harm plants and animals. It can damage buildings and statues, too.

Industries can cause water pollution. Some create dangerous chemical waste. This waste might be dumped into lakes, rivers, or other **surface water**. It might also be buried in the ground. Then it can seep into **groundwater**.

Here are three other ways that water can become polluted:

1. Ships carrying oil may have accidents and spill oil into the **ocean**. Oil is hard to clean up. It coats the fur and feathers of wild mammals and birds. It also covers rocks and sand when it reaches the shore.



On March 24, 1989, the tanker grounded on Bligh Reef in Alaska, releasing 34,000 metric tons (37,000 tons) of crude oil.



A farmer spraying fertilizer

2. Farmers use fertilizer and pesticides to help their crops grow. Some of these chemicals run off the land when it rains. They enter lakes and rivers. Algae that live in water take in the fertilizer. They grow better, too. Lakes can become choked with large amounts of algae. When the algae die, they decompose. This process uses up oxygen from the water. Animals living in the water then die from a lack of oxygen.
3. Human and other animal wastes get into water. They carry disease and pollute the water.

Scientists around the world are looking for ways to prevent water pollution.

✓ Brain Check

- How does industry contribute to pollution?
- How do oil spills harm wildlife?
- How does fertilizer affect living things?