CAR WASH OWNERS

Should you lease out your car wash instead of selling it?

By Ayodele Olasiji, Optimax Commercial · Updated October 18, 2026 · 2 min read · Online at optimaxdeals.com/guides/lease-out-your-car-wash

SHORT ANSWER

Leasing out your car wash means an operator runs it and pays you rent under a written lease while you keep ownership. It suits owners who want out of daily operations but not out of the property. The terms that matter most are rent, length, who repairs and replaces the equipment, who pays utilities and taxes, and what happens to the equipment and memberships when the lease ends.

How to, at a glance

1. Decide whether you want rent, a sale, or to keep running it
2. Set rent, term, maintenance and equipment terms in writing
3. Check the operator's experience and finances
4. Keep a sale option open if the lease does not fit

Questions owners ask

How much rent can I get for my car wash?

It depends on what the wash earns, its equipment and local rents. Operators usually build rent from the sales history, so have two to three years of numbers ready.

Do I keep the equipment if I lease out my car wash?

Usually the equipment stays yours, and the lease says who maintains and replaces it. Put it in writing.

Can an operator lease my car wash and buy it later?

Yes, if the lease gives them an option to purchase or a right of first refusal.

Lease, sell, or keep running it

	Keep running it	Lease it out	Sell it
Your income	Profit, which moves with the business	Rent under the lease	One payment at closing, or over time if you carry financing
Your time	Daily	Low: oversight and collecting rent	None after the handover
You keep the property	Yes	Yes	Only if you sell the business and lease the land to the buyer
Main risk	Labor, repairs, weather	The operator underperforms or stops paying	Selling below what the wash could earn

Terms to negotiate

- Rent: a fixed amount, a share of sales, or a base plus a share.
- Length and renewal options.
- Equipment: who repairs it, and who pays to replace a machine that fails.
- Utilities, property taxes and insurance: net lease or gross lease.
- Security deposit, and a personal guarantee from the operator.
- Monthly sales reports, so you can see how the wash is doing.
- End of lease: condition of the equipment, and who keeps the members and the name.
- An option or right of first refusal for the operator to buy later, if you want one.

Who should lease instead of sell

- Owners who want income without the daily work.
- Owners who own the land and want to keep it as an investment.
- Owners whose wash would sell at a discount today because of old equipment or flat numbers.

How Optimax helps

If leasing fits, we introduce you to an operator interested in leasing washes like yours. If selling fits better, we take it to buyers under NDA. Any Optimax fee on a lease is agreed with you in writing first. Sales are 3% at closing with a $25,000 minimum.

Want rent instead of running it?

Tell us about your wash. We introduce you to an operator interested in leasing washes like yours, or take it to buyers if selling fits better.

Get a private call back
www.optimaxdeals.com/car-wash-owners

Get the free seller kit
www.optimaxdeals.com/seller-kit/car-wash

Optimax Commercial · 701 504 8429 · ayo@optimaxdeals.com