

Food for thought

Winter 2023

A newsletter for Fairfax County food establishment owners and operators and their employees

FOG in Your Pipes?

What is FOG?

Fats, Oil and Grease! FOG comes from cooking oil, lard, shortening, meat fats, sauces, gravy, mayonnaise, butter, ice cream, and soups. Wastewaters from sinks, dishwashers, hoods and floors, and food scraps are also sources of FOG. Grease discharges are predominantly from washing and cleaning operations (washing the grease down the drain), not from deep frying, as many people think.

Why is FOG a problem?

FOG poses a serious threat to the public sanitary sewer and stormwater systems. When not disposed of properly, FOG can form thick clumps of solid deposits along the walls of the sewers, which reduces sewer capacity. These deposits can breakaway and clog sewer lines, causing sewer backups and overflows inside a restaurant or backups through sewer manholes onto private property and streets. Food service establishments that are found responsible for improper FOG disposal may be held liable for cleanup and repair costs related to

sanitary sewer damage, backups, and overflows.

How to Properly Dispose of Fats, Oils and Grease

The most effective way to solve the FOG problem is to keep this material out of the sewer system.

- Wipe off dishes, pots, pans, and cooking utensils before washing instead of rinsing down the drain. Do not pour or scrape FOG down any drain.
- Collect waste cooking oils in grease barrels and schedule a pickup of barrels before they are full. Store grease barrels away from storm sewers. Label grease bins.
- Install a grease trap (typically inside) or grease interceptor (typically outside) to trap the FOG before it enters sewer lines. Check the depth of grease and food solids in the trap/interceptor regularly.
- Grease traps may be cleaned by restaurant staff or a licensed sewage handler. Schedule regular cleaning before the combined grease and solids layers total more than 25 percent of total

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Active Managerial Control Awardees Recognized:



Congratulations to the food service operators who were recognized with an Active Managerial Control award over the last three-month period! During their recent inspections, there were no violations cited and it was observed that good active managerial controls were in place. Congratulations to:

- **Mohammad Kamruzzman**, Wendy's # 6534, 4000 Jermantown Rd., Fairfax, VA
- **Haitham Fayed**, Spring Hills Mount Vernon, 3709 Shannons Green Way, Alexandria, VA
- **Rosa Rodriguez**, McDonald's Falls Church, 6729 Arlington Blvd., Falls Church, VA

See pictures and read details about how they are reducing the risk of foodborne illness in their food establishment on the Health Department website:

www.bit.ly/AMC-Awardees

If you have questions on how to be nominated for an active managerial control award please speak to your area Environmental Health Specialist.



Hepatitis A Among Food Service Workers and How to Prevent It

What is it?

Hepatitis A is a serious liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A causes inflammation and affects the liver's ability to function properly. Symptoms of hepatitis include fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice). The best way to prevent hepatitis A is to get vaccinated.

How is it spread?

Hepatitis A is found in the stool and blood of people who are infected. It spreads when someone eats or drinks an item contaminated with fecal matter (poop) which can occur when a food worker does not wash their hands properly after using the toilet. Other ways of getting the infection include drinking contaminated water, eating raw shellfish from water polluted with sewage, and by handling objects contaminated with the virus.

General Food Safety Tips

- Restaurants and food retailers should always practice safe food handling and preparation measures. Make employee protection a high priority.
- Food workers should never work while sick with stomach (gastrointestinal) illnesses.
- Food workers may consider vaccination to further reduce their risk or if they are in a community where outbreaks are occurring.
- Regular, frequent cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces, including cutting boards and utensils used in food preparation, may help to minimize cross contamination.
- Wash and sanitize display cases and refrigerators where potentially contaminated products are stored.
- Train staff to wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.

For more information about Hepatitis A, visit: www.bit.ly/3GOXTtd or talk to your area health inspector.

Imminent Health Hazards: Stop Operations and Report

Imminent health hazards are emergencies that include fire, flood, extended interruption of electrical or water service, sewage back up, misuse of poisonous or toxic materials, onset of an apparent foodborne illness outbreak, gross unsanitary occurrence or condition, or other circumstances that may endanger public health.

Fairfax County Food Code, Chapter 43.2, requires that if an IMMEDIATE HEALTH HAZARD exists, a PERMIT HOLDER shall immediately discontinue operations and notify the REGULATORY AUTHORITY.

After closing (voluntary or otherwise), notify the Health Department and obtain approval before re-opening the food establishment and resuming operations. If you have any questions about permit suspensions, call 703-246-2201.

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capacity. The total capacity is the depth from the bottom of the outlet pipe to the bottom of the tank.

- Clean up any spills or leaks immediately using dry methods. Food grade paper, paper towels, or newspaper should be used to wipe up grease. Care should also be taken to avoid washing grease into a storm drain.
- Keep a record of the regular grease trap cleaning. The Health Department or the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services may ask to see these records during routine inspections.

Learn more about Fairfax County's discharge policies for FSE and FOG at: www.bit.ly/industrial-waste-discharge

NEW — Food Establishment Inspection Reports Available Online

Retail food establishment inspection reports can now be viewed online. Reports are posted approximately two weeks after a Health Department inspection. These reports are for food facilities in Fairfax County, City or Fairfax, City of Falls Church and the Townes of Herndon, Vienna, and Clifton. Visit: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/inspection-reports



Reggie and Cody invite you to check out the inspection reports!