

Understanding Your Grease/Trap Interceptor

Say goodbye to sewer backups! Keep your pipes clean: manage fats, oils and grease (FOG).

Fairfax County works hard to keep the sanitary sewers clean and free of **fats, oils and grease (FOG)**. Improperly managed **FOG** from restaurants has become a significant problem for wastewater collection and treatment systems.

Where does oil and grease come from?

Grease mainly originates from restaurants, food service operations and other institutional food service establishments. Grease is present in such things as baked goods, cooking oil, shortening, meat fats, dairy products, lard, food scraps, butter and sauces.

Kitchen Operations and FOG

Grease discharges are predominantly from washing and cleaning operations not from deep frying, as many people might think. Major sources of **FOG** discharges to the sewer system are pre-rinse stations prior to dishwashing, pot-washing sinks and ventilation hoods.

Why is FOG a problem?

Grease causes the formation of solid deposits along the walls of the sewers, which reduces sewer capacity. These deposits can lead to the breakaway of accumulated **FOG** and clog sewers downstream.

Grease accumulates in wet wells and pumping stations. When mixed with other materials present in sewage this causes blockages and failure of the pumps.

Grease deposits stuck in the bends of sewer pipes cause restriction and blockages, which leads to sanitary sewer overflows.

Grease accumulates on screens at treatment facilities causing blockages and expensive repairs.

Grease obstructions in the sanitary sewer can be a nuisance to facilities due to the possibilities of foul odors and sewage backups into homes and businesses.

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. Therefore procedures must be established to prevent or reduce the amount of **FOG** being discharged into the sewer. Several practices to reduce **FOG** discharge are listed below:

- Educate kitchen staff on best management practices. Put up signs to remind your employees not to flush **FOG** down the drain.
- Reduce the amount of **FOG** going to the sewer drain:
 - Wipe off greasy pots, pans and kitchen utensils instead of washing down in the sink.
 - Prevent **FOG** from reaching floor drains by wiping up spills instead of washing spills down the drain.
 - Keep fatty liquids such as salad dressings, creams and butter from going down the drain.
 - Clean **FOG** traps/interceptors at scheduled intervals; this helps to keep the combined grease and solids layers less than 25% of total capacity.

- Keep a copy of the receipt to document the cleaning. Record the information on a grease interceptor maintenance log that you can obtain from your sewer provider.
- Keep outdoor **FOG** containers and dumpsters covered. Store **FOG** containers away from storm drains.
- Degreasers, emulsifiers and hot water are not recommended to clean lines; while they break down **FOG** in the facility, the **FOG** can later congeal downstream in sewer lines.
- All interceptors must be maintained in a manner which prevents the trapped substances from being discharged into the wastewater system, stormwater system or any watercourse.
- Regular pumping of a grease interceptor is an effective maintenance procedure to keep the interceptor clean.

This information is presented by the Fairfax County Health Department in partnership with the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

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