

Fat-Free Sewers

How to Prevent
Fats, Oils, and
Greases from
Damaging Your
Restaurant, Building or Home

Fats, Oils and Greases aren't just bad for your arteries and your waistline; they're bad for sewers, too.

Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage home and business interiors, and threaten the environment. An increasingly common cause of overflows is sewer pipes blocked by grease. Grease gets into the sewer from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.

Where does the grease come from?

Most of us know grease as the byproduct of cooking. Grease is found in such things as:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Meat fats | Food scraps |
| Lard | Baking goods |
| Cooking Oil | Sauces |
| Shortening | Dairy products |
| Butter and margarine | |

Too often, grease is washed into the plumbing system, usually through the kitchen sink. Grease sticks to the insides of sewer pipes (both on your property and in the streets). Over time, the grease can build up and block the entire pipe.

Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system. These units only shred solid material into smaller pieces and do not prevent grease from going down the drain.

Commercial additives, including detergents, that claim to dissolve grease may pass grease down the line and cause problems in other areas.



The results can be:

Raw sewage overflowing into your restaurant, business or home;

An expensive and unpleasant cleanup that often must be paid for by you, the business owner, homeowner or renter;

Raw sewage overflowing into parks, yards, and streets;

Potential contact with disease-causing organisms;

An increase in operation and maintenance costs for the restaurant and/or business owner, coupled with the loss of revenue from lost customers;

Higher rental costs for apartment dwellers, due to increased need for plumbing services;

Foul and unpleasant odor and cleanup.



What you can do to help

The easiest way to solve the grease problem and help prevent overflows of raw sewage is to keep this material out of the sewer system in the first place.

There are several ways to do this.

- 1) Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets.
- 2) Scrape grease and food scraps from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, grills and cooking surfaces into a can or the trash for disposal (or recycling where available).
- 3) Do not put grease down garbage disposals. Put baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids, and empty the drain baskets/strainers into the trash for disposal.
- 4) For restaurants and businesses, pour fats, oils and grease into sealed container and dispose of in garbage container, or call a certified grease hauler to pick it up.
- 5) Have grease traps or interceptors serviced regularly to maintain sewer lines efficiently and effectively.
- 6) Speak with your fellow restaurant or business owners, restaurant workers, friends and neighbors about the problem of grease in the sewer system and how to keep it out.
- 7) Call the Public Works Wastewater Division at 933-2311 or the Peninsula Health Center at 594-7300, if you have any questions.

DO NOT:



POUR DOWN DRAIN

DO: STEP 1



Cool

STEP 2



Pour

STEP 3



Wipe/Scrape

What Restaurant and Building Owners Need to Know About Grease Traps or Interceptors

Restaurants, large buildings, such as apartment complexes; and other commercial establishments should have grease traps or interceptors that keep grease out of the sewer system. If fats, oils and greases cannot get out through the sewer pipes, they back up. For a grease trap or interceptor to work correctly, it must be properly

- 1 Designed (sized and manufactured to handle the amount that is expected),
- 2 Installed (level, vented, etc.), and
- 3 Maintained (cleaned and serviced on a frequent basis).

Solids should never be put into grease traps or interceptors. Routine, often daily, maintenance of grease traps and interceptors is needed. Routine, often daily, maintenance of grease traps and interceptors is needed to ensure that they properly reduce or prevent blockages.

Be cautious of chemicals and additives (including soaps and detergents) that claim to dissolve grease. Some of these additives simply pass grease down pipes where it can clog the sewer lines in another area.

For additional information contact:

Wastewater Division
Department of Public Works
513 Oyster Point Rd.
Newport News, VA 23602
Phone: (757) 933-2311
Fax: (757) 269-2772
Web site: www.nnva.gov/870/Wastewater

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