

TCPUD Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Reduction Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is grease control necessary?

Grease can gather in the wastewater collection system causing blockage of sewer flows, resulting in sanitary sewer overflows. The State Water Resources Control Board requires sewer utilities to develop and enforce a fats, oils and grease control program to help prevent these types of sewer spills. District Utility Department staff members' time is frequently diverted from normal maintenance and operations in order to clean sewer pump stations that are regularly blocked with grease.

Q: How does grease from food service facilities cause sewer spills?

When wastewater from food service facilities contains grease, the hot water and soap used in washing dishes and equipment emulsifies or breaks up the grease, allowing it to flow freely through the sewer. As the wastewater cools, the grease congeals causing backups and overflows of sewage. The spill may occur within a roadway or even in your own facility. Grease removal devices like traps and interceptors are designed to prevent grease-related overflows.

Q: When is grease control required?

Grease control is required on all facilities that may introduce grease into the sanitary sewer system. If grease control is warranted, based on the Uniform Plumbing Code and the California Plumbing Code, District Sewer Ordinance 255, Section 8 requires that a grease trap or interceptor be installed under the following conditions:

- On all new or remodeled food service establishments
- When a food service establishment sells
- Following a wastewater backup or discharge due to grease
- When samples of wastewater discharge exceed 400 mg/l of grease

Q: Why do I need a wastewater discharge license?

The license, issued annually, will identify the contact person for the food service establishment, and by their signature on the license, we know that they are informed of these grease control requirements. Annual renewal will ensure that the property owner and food service establishment are aware of any change in our regulations. The license application will provide information to District staff that will help us ensure that your grease control measures are adequate and current.

Q: How much is a license and what is the money used for?

The quarterly license fee for 2007 is \$42.00 and will appear on your regular billing statement, beginning July 2007. The money collected will help to defray District costs for providing staff to assist you with Kitchen Best Management Practices, funding for discharge sampling and funding towards televised inspections of the building sewer laterals.

Q: When is a sample port required?

All existing food service establishments (FSEs) must install a sample port just outside their structures no later than September 15, 2007. New or remodeled FSEs must install the sample port as a part of the permit process. Discharge collected from sample ports will be analyzed to determine if existing grease control measures are keeping kitchen wastewater below the limit of 400 mg/l of grease, as set by District Sewer Ordinance 255, Section 8.

Q: What are Kitchen Best Management Practices?

Also known as "Kitchen BMPs," these are practices, procedures and maintenance activities performed by establishments to reduce fats, oils and grease in the wastewater discharge. They include:

- Collecting all cooking grease and liquid oil from pots, pans and fryers in covered grease containers for recycling
- Scraping or dry-wiping excess food and grease from dishes, pots, pans and fryers
- Installing drain screens on all kitchen drains
- Having spill kits readily available
- Properly maintaining and cleaning exhaust filters, grease traps and interceptors
- An on-going employee training program

Q: Is my existing grease trap adequate?

The size of your grease trap depends upon the number of fixtures connected to it and the maintenance schedule. Some facilities need more than one grease trap. District staff will help you to determine if your existing trap is properly sized. If properly sized and frequently cleaned you should be able to meet the discharge limit of 400 mg/l of grease. If your discharge exceeds this limit, you may be required to install alternative or additional grease control devices.

Q: How often should I clean my grease trap?

Our staff will help you determine the optimum frequency for grease trap cleaning based upon your specific facility.

Q: Why must I remove my garbage disposal?

Garbage disposals that discharge into the public sewer system must be removed from service by May 15, 2007. Waste from the disposals must be screened and placed into the garbage for hauling to the sanitary landfill.

Q: Can I continue to use chemical or biological agents to reduce grease?

No, the use of chemical and / or biological agents to dissolve fats, oils and grease is not allowed. They simply move the grease into the sewer collection system. If you have been using these materials, please discontinue by April 1, 2007. Contact the District to learn about alternative grease control measures.

Q: How do I dispose of the grease?

Grease traps can be cleaned by the food service establishment, and you may either contract with a grease hauler to remove the waste or, once properly bagged and mixed with kitty litter, the sanitary landfill may accept it. Grease interceptors must be pumped by a pumping service that you contract with.

Q: Who do I contact for more information?

For more information, please contact Brad Stocking, Construction Inspector, 530-583-3796, x 44.