

FOG: Fats, Oils and Grease Program

What is FOG?

FOG stands for Fats, Oils and Grease, all of which can severely damage your sanitary sewer system. FOG includes animal and vegetable fats, as well as oils used to cook and prepare food. Food Service Establishments (FSEs) use large volumes of FOG.

Grease Interceptors are necessary at food service facilities in order to prevent fats, oils and grease from entering the publicly owned sanitary sewer system. Improper disposal of wastewater is a major health issue and a critical violation of the Food Service Facilities Regulations. Food service facilities are defined as a place where food or drink is prepared for sale or service on the premises or elsewhere. This definition includes restaurants, coffee shops, cafeterias, short order cafes, luncheonettes, taverns, sandwich stands, soda fountains, retail markets or retail bakery outlets. Capturing the grease that is generated by a food service facility at the source reduces maintenance costs and decreases the possibility of Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSO) occurring within the sewer system.

For more information, see the St. Mary's County Health Department's [Food Service Facility Grease Trap Fact Sheet](#).

Fats, Oils and Grease, otherwise known as "FOG", can be a significant cause of sewer blockages that lead to SSOs. Grease and grease-like products can significantly increase the likelihood of sewer overflows. Grease can also cause blockages or aggravate blockages due to roots or structural deficiencies. Restaurants, cafeterias, and other food service facilities, as well as industrial facilities, can discharge grease as part of their normal sanitary flows that can lead, in time, to blockages, backups and overflows. MetCom's Sewer Use Regulations specifically state that it is unlawful for any user to discharge any fats, oils, or greases of animal or vegetable origin in concentrations greater than 100 mg/L into the public sewer



Pour grease and cooking oil into a lidded coffee can or other disposable container.

What is the FOG Program?

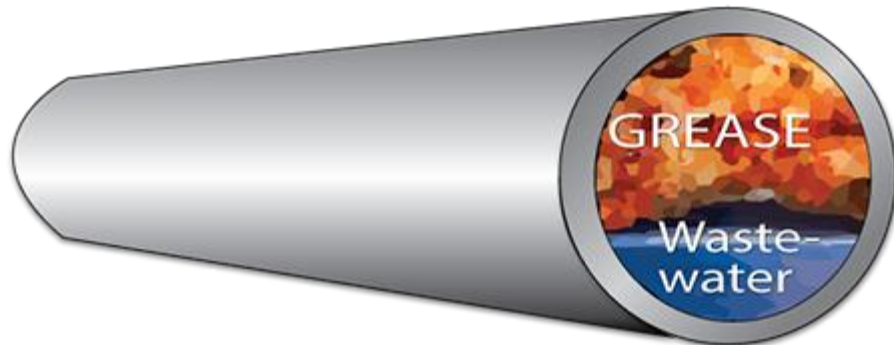
The FOG Program consists of periodic inspections of Food Service Facilities (FSF's) to determine compliance with the St. Mary's County Sewer Use Regulation (SUR) and to gather records of routine maintenance of grease interceptors and grease traps.

MetCom works in conjunction with the local Health Department to determine if grease, oil, and sand interceptors are required at any existing non-residential facility for the proper handling of wastewater containing excessive amounts of grease and oil, or sand. All interception units shall be of type and capacity approved by MetCom and shall be so located to be easily accessible for cleaning and inspection. The interceptors are inspected by MetCom quarterly, cleaned, and repaired regularly, as needed, by the user at their expense. All new commercial Food Service Facilities are required to provide a 1,000-gallon minimum grease interceptor and provide proof of proper maintenance of same as requested.

How FOG Impacts the Sewer System

When poured down the drain, FOG can cause problems in sanitary sewer pipes and sewer laterals.

Grease buildup in pipes can cause major damage to pipes and lead to sewage back-ups in your business.



Grease is one of the leading causes of sewer clogs and overflows.

What Can I Do to Help Prevent FOG Damage?

1. Clean Floor Mats and Other Greasy Equipment in the Proper Place

Wash all floor mats and grills in a mop sink so the wastewater goes to a grease control device. Never clean this kind of equipment in an area where wastewater can flow to a gutter, storm drain or street.

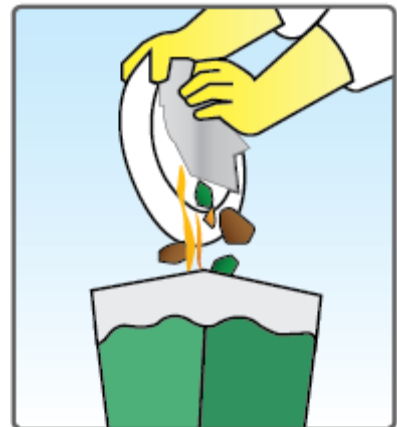


2. Safely Dispose of Grease in the Kitchen

- Post “No Grease” signs above sinks.
- Use garbage disposals as little as possible; they fill up grease traps too quickly!
- Educate and train kitchen staff about FOG control.
- Wipe grease out of pots, pans and plates with paper towel prior to washing. This helps prevent grease build-up in your sewer lateral and Service Authority sewer lines.
- Use strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids; empty strainer contents into trash.

3. Use Care when Storing Grease Outside

- Store grease in leak-proof containers with tightfitting lids. Once full, discard in trash with the lid secured.
- DO NOT pour down sinks or drains.
- DO NOT pour into storm grates or on the ground. This will clog the drains and pollute streams.
- Use only containers in good condition.
- Secure containers to prevent accidental spills, vandalism or unauthorized use.
- Conduct regular inspections of the storage area, and regularly maintain the container and storage area.
- Store containers away from storm drains.

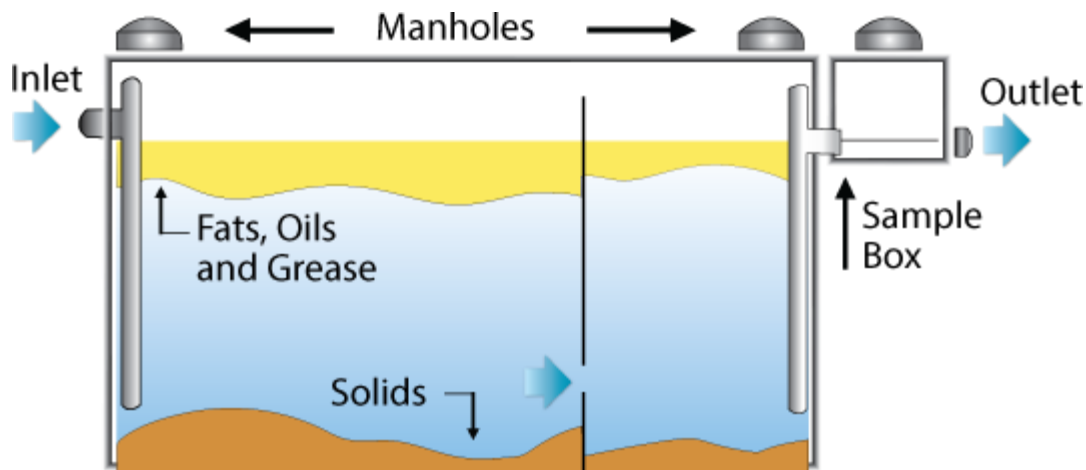


- Toss greasy or fatty food scraps in the trash rather than the garbage disposal.

Required Steps for Restaurants and Food Service Establishments

If your facility has been approved for a provisional waiver from having to install a grease interceptor, MetCom requires you to sample your facility's discharge to ensure that it is meeting the discharge guidelines and limitations set forth in the Section 4.1(q) of the Public Sewer Use Regulation in accordance with the **Sampling Protocol for Fats, Oil and Grease**. Otherwise, please:

1. Install proper grease control equipment.
2. Maintain (routinely clean or pump out) grease interceptors and grease traps.
3. Keep records on-site of grease control equipment pumping/cleaning and maintenance and provide them to PWCSA inspectors.
4. Train staff to implement best management practices for FOG.
5. Keep hoods clean. Wash hood filters in sinks that flow to grease control devices attached to the sanitary sewer systems.



The grease and solids layers inside interceptors must not exceed 25% of the total volume. Service Authority inspectors will check FSEs' interceptors for compliance.

In the Event of a Grease Spill:

- Begin cleanup immediately
- Do not use detergents or degreasers.
- Block or seal off nearby storm drains.
- Contact a clean-up contractor and the appropriate agency if the spill is unmanageable.
- Never wash leaks, spills or materials used for cleaning up spills onto nearby streets or into drains.
- Dispose of all materials used to clean up spills in a garbage can or dumpster.



The FOG Program is not just good for sewers. It's the law.

If the grease interceptor has not been maintained (with documented removal of accumulated grease and cleaning), has been bypassed, or if significant grease is discovered within the service connection, MetCom will issue a letter to the owner giving notice of the ordinance/policy non-compliance and requiring action be taken to prevent further discharge of grease into the system. To help restaurants comply with the FOG control regulations, our wastewater inspectors will conduct inspections and notify the establishment of their compliance requirements.

The Sewer Use Regulation (SUR) prohibits sewer users from discharging floatable fats, waxes, grease or oils into the sanitary sewer. Failure to comply with these regulations may result in suspension / disconnection of sewer service if it causes harmful conditions; and liable for a maximum civil penalty of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per violation, per day.

In some instances, however, it has been shown that some food service facilities do not produce enough fats, oils or grease to warrant the installation of a grease interceptor and a waiver can be granted. For more information regarding how a waiver of the grease interceptor requirements may be requested, please contact MetCom's Operations Department at 301-737-7400.

What is an FSF?

An FSE is a [Food Service Facility](#). It is any facility where food is prepared and/or served to individuals. MetCom works in conjunction with the local Health Department to determine if grease, oil, and sand interceptors are required at any existing non-residential facility for the proper handling of wastewater containing excessive amounts of grease and oil, or sand. All interception units shall be of type and capacity approved by MetCom and shall be so located to be easily accessible for cleaning and inspection. The interceptors are inspected by MetCom, but are cleaned and repaired regularly, as needed, by the user at their expense. All new commercial Food Service Facilities are required to provide a 1,000-gallon minimum grease interceptor and provide proof of proper maintenance of same as requested.

Helpful Tip

Get all employees on-board with thorough FOG training, readily available job aids such as signs, and giving positive feedback for a job well-done.

Contact Us

For more information regarding the FOG Program or the requirements and sizing criteria for grease interceptors, please contact MetCom's Operations Department at 301-737-7400.