



## A FACTSHEET FOR:

# Best Management Practice for Fats, Oils, and Grease

*Residual fats, oils and grease (FOG) are by-products that food service establishments must constantly manage. Typically, FOG enter a facility's plumbing system from ware washing, floor cleaning, and equipment sanitation. Sanitary sewer systems are neither designed nor equipped to handle the FOG that can accumulate on the interior of the municipal sewer collection system pipes from improperly maintained discharges. The best way to manage FOG is to keep the material out of the plumbing systems. The following are suggestions for proper FOG management.*

### Dry Clean-Up

Practice dry cleanup. Remove food waste with “dry” methods such as scraping, wiping, or sweeping before using “wet” methods that use water. Wet methods typically wash the water and waste materials into the drains where it eventually collects on the interior walls of the drainage pipes. Do not pour grease, fats, or oils from cooking down the drain and do not use the sinks to dispose of food scraps. Likewise it is important to educate kitchen staff not to remove drain screens as this may allow paper or plastic cups, straws, and other utensils to enter the plumbing system during cleanup. The success of dry cleanup is dependent upon the behavior of the employee and availability of the tools for removal of food waste before washing. To practice dry cleanup:

- Use rubber scrapers to remove fats, oils and grease from cookware, utensils, chafing dishes, and serving ware.
- Use food grade paper to soak up oil and grease under fryer baskets.
- Use paper towels to wipe down work areas. Cloth towels will accumulate grease that will eventually end up in your drains from towel washing/ rinsing.

### Spill Prevention

Preventing spills reduces the amount of waste on food preparation and serving areas that will require cleanup. A dry workplace is safer for employees in avoiding slips, trips, and falls. For spill prevention:

- Empty containers before they are full to avoid spills.
- Use a cover to transport grease container contents to the rendering barrel.
- Provide employees with the proper tools (ladles, ample containers, etc.) to transport materials without spilling.

### Maintenance

Maintenance is key to avoiding FOG blockages. Whatever method or technology is used to collect, filter and store FOG, ensure that equipment is regularly maintained. All staff should be aware of and trained to perform correct cleaning procedures, particularly for under-sink grease traps that are prone to break down due to improper maintenance. A daily and weekly maintenance schedule is highly recommended.

- Contract with a management company to professionally clean large hood filters. Small hoods can be hand-cleaned with spray detergents and wiped down with cloths for cleaning. Hood filters can be effectively cleaned by routinely spraying with hot water with little or no detergents over the mop sink that should be connected to a grease trap. After hot water rinse (separately trapped), filter panels can go into the dishwasher. For hoods to operate properly in the removal of grease-laden vapors, the ventilation system will also need to be balanced with sufficient make-up air.

- Skim/ filter fryer grease daily and change oil when necessary. Use a test kit provided by your grocery distributor rather than simply “guess” to determine when to change oil. This extends the life of both the fryer and the oil. Build-up of carbon deposits on the bottom of the fryer acts as an insulator that forces the fryer to heat longer, thus causing the oil to break down sooner.
- Collect fryer oil in an oil rendering tank for disposal or transport it to a bulk oil rendering tank instead of discharging it into a grease trap or interceptor.
- Cleaning intervals depend upon the type of food establishment involved. Some facilities require monthly or once every two months cleaning of below ground interceptors. Establishments that operate a large number of fryers or handle a large amount of fried foods such as chicken, along with ethnic food establishments may need at least monthly cleanings. Full cleaning of interceptors (removing all liquids and solids and scraping the walls) is a worthwhile investment. Remember, sugars, starches and other organics accumulate from the bottom up. If sediment is allowed to accumulate in the interceptor, it will need to be pumped more frequently.
- Develop a rotation system if multiple fryers are in use. Designate a single fryer for products that are particularly high in deposits, and change that one more often.
- Make sure all drains screens are installed.
- Prior to washing and rinsing, use a hot water pre-rinse that is separately trapped to remove non-emulsified oils and greases from ware washing. Wash and rinse steps should also be trapped.
- Empty grill top scrap baskets or scrap boxes and hoods into the rendering barrel.
- Easy does it! Instruct staff to be conservative in their use of fats, oils, and grease in food preparation and serving.
- Ensure that edible food is not flushed down your drains. Edible food waste may be donated to a local food bank. Inedible food waste can be collected by a local garbage feeder who will use food discards for feeding livestock. Food donation can help restaurants reduce disposal costs and it puts the food in the hands of those who can use it.

### **Grease Traps**

- For grease traps and interceptors to be effective, the units must be properly sized, constructed, and installed in a location to provide an adequate retention time for settling and accumulation of the FOG. If the units are too close to the FOG discharge and do not have enough volume to allow amassing of the FOG, the emulsified oils will pass through the unit without being captured. For information on properly locating, constructing, and sizing grease traps and interceptors, contact your local city representatives and examine EPA guidance documents.
- Ensure all grease-bearing drains discharge to the grease interceptor. These include mop sinks, woks, wash sinks, prep sinks, utility sinks, pulpers, pre-rinse sinks, can washes, and floor drains in food preparation areas such as those near a fryer or tilt/ steam kettle. No toilet waste should be plumbed to the grease interceptor.

### **Oil & Grease Collection/ Recycling & Food Donations**

FOG are commodities that if handled properly can be treated as a valuable resource.

- Begin thinking of oil and grease as a valuable commodity. Some rendering companies will offer services free-of-charge and others will give a rebate on the materials collected.
- Use 25-gallon rendering barrels with covers for onsite collection of oil and grease other than from fryers. Educate kitchen staff on the importance of keeping outside barrels covered at all times. During storms, uncovered or partially covered barrels may allow water to enter the barrel resulting in oil running onto the ground and possibly into storm drains. Such water can “contaminate” an otherwise useful by-product.
- Use a 3-compartment sink for ware washing. Begin with a hot pre-wash, then a scouring sink with detergent, then a rinse sink.

### **Consumer Tip**

Buyer Beware! When choosing a method of managing your oil and grease, ensure that it does what the vendor says it will do. Some technologies or “miracle cures” don’t eliminate the problem but result in grease accumulations further down the sewer line. “Out of sight” is not “out of mind”. Check the vendor’s references.