

Grease Management for Food Service Facilities

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.) Are there local limits/regulations for fats, oils and greases?

A.) Wastewater from food preparation, dish washing, and floor washing are considered process wastewaters, and are subject to local limits set forth in the Town of Amherst Local Sewer Use Ordinance.

The Town of Amherst Local Sewer Use Ordinance enables the Town Engineer to assess fines of up to \$10,000 for violations associated with the excessive discharge of fats, oils, and greases to the Town of Amherst sanitary sewer system. The Town of Amherst Local Sewer Use Ordinance Specifically Prohibits;

Any water or wastes containing fats, wax, grease, or oils, whether emulsified or not, in excess of 100 milligrams/liter (mg/l) or containing substances which may solidify or become viscous at 0o Celsius. Also, petroleum oil, non-biodegradable cutting oil, or products of mineral oil origin in amounts that will cause interference or pass through.

Solid or viscous substances in quantities of such size, capable of causing obstruction to the flow in the publicly owned treatment works resulting in interference but in no case solids greater that one-half inch in any dimension.

Q.) What is the proper set up for a grease trap system?

A.) Please go to the last page for a diagram of a typical grease trap system.

Q.) Why is the issue of sanitary sewer backups (overflows) important?

A.) Overflowing sanitary sewers can release disease-causing bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens to the environment. Thus, public health, safety and welfare can be jeopardized.

Q.) Is there a difference between grease traps and grease interceptors?

A.) Not really. Both devices do the same thing – separate and retain free floating oils and greases. Small, in-floor or under-the-sink prefabricated steel units are most often referred as grease traps. Grease interceptors are the larger units located outdoors that offer much longer hydraulic retention times.

Q.) How can I ensure that my grease trap works effectively?

A.) It is important that your grease trap is properly sized, installed, and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Proper maintenance will help ensure that your grease trap is functioning properly, minimizing the amount of grease that ends up the Town's sewers. Grease

trap maintenance is often neglected, so be sure to have the trap inspected and cleaned out regularly.

Q.) How do I determine the proper maintenance frequency for my grease trap?

A.) Your maintenance and clean-out schedule should follow the manufacturer's recommendations. It is recommended that you clean your grease trap when the accumulated grease and sediment make up 25 percent of the total liquid volume of the trap. Not every grease trap will require the same maintenance schedule. The amount of grease discharged, the flow volume, and the size of the grease trap will determine the maintenance frequency.

As part of the Town of Amherst's Grease Management Program, voluntary pretreatment inspections will be performed at all facilities that are engaged in food preparation. Personnel from the Environmental Control Division will assist each facility to determine a suggested maintenance frequency for their individual installations.

Q.) What are some Do's and Don'ts associated with proper grease trap operation?

A.) To avoid excessive FOG discharge or overloading of your grease trap, you can scrape plates into the garbage prior to rinsing or use other dry cleanup practices to reduce the amount of grease that goes down the drain. Other ideas to ensure good operation of your grease trap:

Don't pour fats, oils, or greases down the drain.

Educate your staff on proper cleaning procedure.

Don't let food waste go through the grease trap. It can reduce the trap's effectiveness/capacity.

Regularly inspect and clean out your grease trap.

Use an additional grease recovery device to remove grease from sources that adds large amounts of grease to your wastewater, such as pot wash or pre-rinse sinks.

Do not flush interceptor with hot water to clear or clean the grease trap in lieu of pumping out the device.

If a food grinder is determined to be necessary, it must be directly followed by a solids interceptor, and then plumbed to the grease trap.

Install solids interceptors on sinks, dishwashers, and floor drains to prevent solids from entering your grease trap.

Make sure when cleaning your grease trap that each chamber is cleaned out thoroughly. Inspect and then fill up the separator with clean water before you begin discharging.

Q.) How do I dispose of the collected FOGs?

A.) Grease and other waste matter that has been removed from the interceptor should not be introduced into any drain, sewer, or natural body of water. This waste matter should be placed in proper containers for recycling or disposal. Recycling of grease is encouraged when feasible.

Check the local telephone directory under Rendering Companies and/or Grease Traps for companies that can accept FOG from food preparation.

Q.) Which fixtures need to be plumbed through a grease trap?

A.) All discharges from food related activities must be plumbed to a grease interceptor. Fixtures covered in this requirement include, but are not limited to: dish sinks, floor drains, dishwasher pre-rinse, and mop sinks. The use of food grinders while not prohibited, is strongly discouraged. If a food grinder is determined to be necessary, it must be directly followed by a solids interceptor, and then plumbed to a grease interceptor. A food grinder used exclusively for vegetable waste is an exception, and may be plumbed directly to the sanitary sewer.

Q.) Does the use of emulsifiers or bioaugmentation products replace the need for routine grease trap maintenance?

A.) No, the use of these bioaugmentation products is not an acceptable alternative to the proper pretreatment of fats, oils, and greases. The use of enzyme chemical products is not prohibited; however the Town of Amherst does not recommend their use. Enzymes temporarily emulsify the fats, oils, and greases which coagulate on the inside walls of the sewer lines further downstream, restricting sewage flow, which could result in sewage backups and blockages.

Diagram of a typical Grease Trap System

