

Keeping
Fats, Oils,
and
Grease
Out of the Sewer



*Questions and Answers for Food Service Establishments
regarding
Fats, Oil, and Grease and Grease Removal Devices*



City of Paso Robles, Wastewater Division, 1000 Spring Street, Paso Robles, CA 93446

What are Fats, Oil, and Grease (FOG)?

Fog is generated from the preparation of food at commercial and institutional facilities such as restaurants, cafeterias, caterers, bakeries, grocery stores, convenience stores, nursing homes, schools, and food processors. FOG gets into the City's sewer system from these users that do not have adequate grease removal equipment. Common sources of grease are cooking oil, lard, fats from meat or fish, butter and margarine, baking goods, sauces, gravies and dairy products.

Why is FOG a problem?

When FOG is discharged down the drain, it can accumulate in private sewer laterals and in the City's sewer mains causing Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs) which can flow untreated into our storm drains and waterways. Grease blockages in private sewer lines can require costly repairs and possible temporary closure of the business.

What Ordinances does the City of Paso Robles have on grease removal devices?

The City's Sewer Ordinance requires restaurant or similar establishments to install an approved grease interceptor or implement other grease reducing practices. Requirements for the installation of a grease interceptor shall be determined on a case by case basis by the City, using the Uniform Plumbing Code as a guide. Additionally, grease and oil interceptors or gravity separating devices shall be provided at the user's expense when, in the opinion of the Director of Public Works, they are necessary for the proper handling of the liquid wastes containing grease or other harmful ingredients. All grease removal devices shall be in an easily accessible location for the purposes of cleaning and inspection. All devices shall be properly maintained.

Why is the City requiring grease removal devices in existing facilities?

The State Water Resource Control Board requires the City to implement a FOG Program to prevent SSOs under the Waste Discharge Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Systems. This Program must include requirements to install and maintain grease removal devices, and the authority to inspect grease producing facilities. Therefore, the City is requiring grease removal devices to comply with the State mandates.

Why are grease removal devices required?

Properly maintained grease removal devices prevent excess FOG and solids from entering

the City's sewer system by routing wastewater from fixtures and equipment that may contain FOG through a device designed to slow the flow of wastewater allowing the FOG to separate and float at the top of the device.

My business generates very little FOG, why should I install a grease removal device?

Even though your business may generate only a small amount of FOG, it is the combined impact of all of the food service establishments within the City that discharge FOG to the sanitary sewer.

What are the different types of grease removal devices?

There are two basic types of grease removal devices. The type of grease removal device required is determined by the location, the number of fixtures or equipment that discharge grease to the sewer, and the flow from these fixtures. (Fixtures and equipment that are required to flow through a grease removal device may include scullery/pot sinks, soup kettles, sauce or mop sinks, and floor drains next to grease-containing areas.)

- **Hydromechanical Grease Interceptors** are small units usually found inside the building under a sink or near any fixtures discharging grease. They are usually single chambered devices with baffles inside and utilize a flow control designed to slow the flow of wastewater allowing the grease to rise to the surface. Their capacities are rated in gallons of flow and pounds of grease they hold.
- **Gravity Grease Interceptors** are in-ground devices located outside of the building, with a minimum capacity of 500 gallons, and are configured with multiple chambers. The capacity of the interceptor allows time for the wastewater to cool, allowing the grease time to separate and rise to the surface. In-ground interceptors are the most efficient method for removing grease however; they may not be able to be installed at all locations due to physical constraints.

What requirements must be met?

- **New facilities and remodels** must install a grease removal device per the *2016 California Plumbing code*.

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- **Existing facilities:** The grease removal device should be sized using the *2016 California Plumbing Code*; however, the requirements may be modified due to physical constraints. **Multiple units may be used to achieve the intent of the law.** (Note that multiple units will require additional maintenance.)
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What fixtures or equipment cannot be plumbed to a grease interceptor?

Plumbing containing discharges from toilets, urinals, wash basins, and other fixtures containing fecal materials should bypass the grease interceptor.

NOTE: A properly sized and designed grease interceptor may not work efficiently if it is not installed correctly. Be sure to use a licensed contractor who can handle all aspects of the interceptor installation which may include equipment procurement, plumbing, and in-ground installations that may include excavations and concrete cutting/repair.

What other factors should be considered?

The grease removal device should be installed as close as practical to the fixture(s) being served. This is important because every foot of piping between the fixture(s) and the interceptor is a potential maintenance problem.

The grease removal device should be located in an accessible area such that cleaning and maintenance can be easily performed. The placement should allow the cover of the grease removal device to be visible and easily removable for cleaning and removal of the baffles inside.

What are the costs of installation?

The cost of installation will vary depending on the site. Cost factors include the size of the device, space, grade, proximity to a sewer line, and above-ground or in-ground installation.

What is the installation process?

Grease removal devices require a permit from the building department. Check with the City to determine if any other construction work to be done requires a permit. The typical process of obtaining a building permit is:

- **Contact a licensed contractor** to determine the proper sizing of the grease removal

device.

- **Submit plans** showing the sizing calculations for the grease removal device, and a schematic for all plumbing changes and the specifications for the grease removal device.
 - **Obtain a building permit.**
 - **Install the grease removal device** through the City inspection program.
 - *The **building permit must be finalized** by the City.*
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What are the requirements after the Grease Removal Device is installed?

All food service facilities are asked to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) for FOG. These include:

- Maintaining the grease removal device properly. The device must be routinely cleaned in order to properly protect the City's collection system from FOG. A grease interceptor maintenance log will be required to be kept to document cleaning intervals. Receipts for cleaning interceptors should be maintained and available for review.
 - Using water temperatures less than 140° F. Discharging wastewater with temperatures in excess of 140° F to a grease removal device will dissolve grease which can solidify downstream in the City's main lines, coating the lines and possibly causing blockages and overflows.
 - Emulsifiers are not allowed. Products used to emulsify grease may clean your lines or reduce the amount of grease in the grease removal device, however, the grease then solidifies downstream in the City's sewer mains coating the lines and possibly causing blockages and overflows. These products defeat the purpose of the grease removal device.
 - Collect and recycle waste cooking oil. This will reduce the cleaning frequency of the grease removal device.
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Who do I call if I need more information?

- For more information on the City's FOG program, please call the City's Water Quality Specialist at 805-227-7239.
 - For more information on obtaining a building permit or the requirements for installation of a grease removal device, please call the City's Building Department at 805-237-3850.
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