

FOG FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FATS, OILS, AND GREASE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

- **What is FOG?**

- FOG is a semi-solid viscous byproduct of food preparation. It can be derived from either vegetable or animal sources. Although it can be found in residential kitchens, it is of particular concern in commercial kitchens due to the large volume of fats, oils, and grease used to prepare food on a daily basis.

Did you know that FOG causes approximately 80% of all dry weather sanitary sewer overflows within the City of Fort Smith?

- **What is the difference between Oil and Grease?**

- The terms oil and grease, though almost always used together, represent very different substances.
- Oil is the liquid from left over from frying which does not solidify.
- Grease is the white solid residue left in the pan after frying items such as bacon.

- **What are common sources of FOG? Where does FOG come from?**

- FOG comes from cooking meat and meat based products. Sauces, salad dressings and the use of butter, margarine, lard or oil in food preparation are also major sources of FOG.
- When foods are prepared, oils and greases are cooked out of foods or are added as ingredients or non-stick remedies. The FOG ends up on cookware, dishware, kitchen equipment and even floors and floor-mats, all of which must be washed. When kitchen equipment and wares are cleaned, the FOG is washed off and enters the plumbing system. Shortly after this grease enters the drain, it begins to cool and separate from the dishwater.

- Some of the common sources of FOG include:

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| Butter | Mayonnaise |
| Cheese | Meats |
| Cookies | Pastries |
| Gravy | Salad Dressings |
| Ice Cream | Sauces |
| Margarine | Used Fryer Oil |

Marinades Yogurt
Food Scraps Bacon Grease and Au Jour

- **Why should you be concerned about FOG?**
 - Sewer capacity reduction, increased maintenance costs, shortened infrastructure lifespan, blockages, backups, overflows, fines, facility closures, vermin, treatment plant upsets, environmental damage, odor, human health hazards..... Quite an extensive list of potential problems from just a little grease.
 - FOG sticks to the walls of sewer pipes and builds up over time. Eventually, it can block the pipes completely, resulting in sewage backing up into basements, overflowing from manholes or discharging into local streams (SSOs).
 - FOG related overflows can result in property damage, environmental damage, and civil penalties and fines.
 - It is no coincidence that plumbing companies are frequently called to restaurants and other food service establishments to un-clog blocked lines.

- **How does FOG enter the sewer system?**
 - At food service establishments, the common ways for FOG to get into the sewer system include the following:
 - Washing FOG covered dishes and cookware without first scraping and wiping grease into a trash container.
 - Washing hood and grill wash-down-water into floor drains.
 - Using garbage disposals to dispose of FOG bearing food particles and scraps.
 - Improper drain connections that bypass FOG collection systems.
 - Flushing FOG down the drain with hot water (hot-flushing).

- **What can I do to help prevent FOG from entering the sewer system?**
 - To reduce the amount of FOG entering the collection system, remember to **SCRAPE**.
 - Scrape or wipe grease and food scraps from all cookware into a sealable container or trash bin.

- Collect liquid cooking oils in an oil rendering tank or oil recycling container.
 - Rotate cleaning schedule among fryers and food preparation devices.
 - Assign clean-up tasks to specific employees
 - Prepare foods with minimal amounts of fats, oil, and grease.
 - Educate your employees on the importance of reducing FOG and following proper FOG Best Management Practices (BMPs).

- **What are BMPs?**
 - BMPs are Best Management Practices. These are things that can be performed at your business to help reduce the amount of FOG that could go down the sewer.

- **Are all FOG Generators required to implement BMPs?**
 - Yes, BMPs are vital to help reduce the amount of FOG that can enter into the sewer.
 - When you receive a FOG Permit, you will be trained on BMPs by City staff.

- **What about using a garbage grinder, hot water, or detergents to wash FOG down the drain?**
 - Garbage disposals grind up grease bearing food particles. However, it does nothing to prevent FOG from entering the sewer system. This leads to a higher incidence of sewer clogs and SSOs.
A much safer practice is to simply scrape all remaining food particles and scraps into a trash bin.
 - Hot water will cool down once it enters the sewer system and cause any FOG that had come into contact with the hot water to cool down and coagulate and solidify. This is also called “hot flushing”.
 - Detergents other than typical dishwashing detergents that claim to dissolve FOG may cause blockages to occur further down the sewer system.

- **Can enzymes or additives be used to lower my FOG discharge?**
 - The use of enzymes and additives are prohibited.

- **What is a FOG interceptor and how does it work?**
 - A FOG interceptor is a multi-compartment device that is constructed in different sizes and is generally required to be located underground between a FOG generator and the connection to the sewer system.
 - These devices primarily use gravity to separate FOG from the wastewater as it moves from one compartment to the next.
 - These devices must be cleaned, maintained, and have the FOG removed and disposed of in a proper manner on regular intervals to be effective.
 - They are also known as grease interceptors, oil interceptors, or oil/water separators.

- **Is there a permit fee and how much is it?**
 - There are currently no permit fees for the FOG Program.

- **How will I know what to do to be compliant?**
 - When you receive a FOG Permit, you will be trained by City staff on the permit requirements.
 - City staff will provide all the needed paperwork and forms you need to fill out.
 - City staff will also be available for questions by phone and e-mail during the week.