



## Frequent Questions Regarding FOG



### **What is FOG and why do we have a FOG Ordinance?**

FOG refers to fat, oil and grease that are generated from normal business operations of food service establishments (FSEs). FOG is commonly washed into the plumbing system during clean-up through the kitchen sink. As it cools, it congeals and decreases pipe capacity both inside the FSE and in the main sewer system. FOG can block your drain, your neighbors' drain and main collection lines, potentially becoming an environmental and public health risk.

The primary goal of the FOG Ordinance is to eliminate FOG-related sanitary sewer overflows. FOG Inspectors will routinely inspect kitchens and FSEs to ensure compliance with regulations. It is the responsibility of each FSE to develop an effective FOG waste management plan and properly dispose of their FOG waste on a consistent basis.

### **Is my business a Food Service Establishment (FSE)?**

The FOG Ordinance defines an FSE as "an operation or enterprise that stores, prepares, packages, serves, vends, or otherwise provides food for human consumption". This includes, but is not limited to, restaurants, bars, schools, daycares, churches, nursing homes, bakeries, grocery stores, caterers, food/meat processors and other food preparation operations.

### **How often does my grease interceptor or grease trap need to be maintained?**

There is a 25% rule that applies to both grease interceptors and grease traps that states the FOG (floats to the top) and solids (settles to the bottom) content of the device should not be in excess of 25% of the grease interceptor / trap depth. Typically, cleaning frequencies for grease traps may be in the range of daily to weekly. Cleaning frequencies for grease interceptors can be expected to be monthly to quarterly. *All FSEs must have grease removal devices maintained by a certified grease hauler when they reach 25% of the design capacity OR every 3 months, whichever comes first.*

This 25% rule allows the wastewater enough residence time inside the device to effectively remove the FOG and solids from the wastewater before it reaches the sanitary sewer collection system. The single most important thing you can do to help extend the length of time between maintenance and save your facility in maintenance expense is to use diligence in dry clean-up prior to wet clean-up. Scrape food debris in the garbage and dry-wipe the dishes prior to immersion in hot water (sink or dishwasher).

### **Will my existing grease trap (indoor, under the sink unit) be sufficient to comply with the FOG Ordinance?**

A grease trap that is properly sized and installed to remove the FOG at your FSE is important. Following the suggested best management practices (BMPs) and routine maintenance of the trap will increase the probability of meeting the discharge limits of the FOG Ordinance. Indoor grease traps are much smaller in design and therefore need more maintenance to prevent the FOG from reaching the sanitary sewers. Make sure baffles and deflector shields are installed properly. If the trap is not cleaned frequently or correctly it will not perform well and could put your FSE at risk of violating FOG discharge limits.

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### **May I use chemicals, enzymes or bacteria in my grease removal device or in my drains?**

The FOG Ordinance prohibits the use of enzymes, emulsifying chemicals, hot water or other agents as a grease abatement method to grease removal devices or drains. These chemicals keep the FOG emulsified long enough to become a serious problem downstream as dilution of the chemical allows for the FOG to congeal and decrease pipe capacity, having the potential to cause a serious blockage and sanitary sewer overflow. You may contact the WRA FOG Program regarding products that have been approved or visit our website at [www.dmmwra.org](http://www.dmmwra.org).

### **What are the most important things for me, the FSE owner or operator, to know about the FOG Ordinance?**

The WRA will perform routine and compliance inspections. The important items the WRA will check are:

1. The grease removal device (interior grease trap or exterior grease interceptor) is under 25% full of FOG and solids. This will be done via physical inspection by the WRA Inspector.
2. Maintenance records, including accurate measurements by your certified grease hauler, are on-site and available at the request of the inspector. Records must be kept for a period of 3 years.
3. Any additional requirements from the official inspection report.

### **What enforcement action(s) could potentially occur if the regulations of the FOG Ordinance are not met by my FSE?**

Enforcement actions could include, but are not limited to, notice of violation without fine; notice of violation with fines of \$100 or \$200; civil penalties; submission of a compliance plan; installation of a properly sized, exterior grease interceptor; and clean-up costs for blockages and sanitary sewer overflows.

### **Is there a FOG inspection fee?**

Per FOG Ordinance, the WRA charges a \$50.00 fee for routine inspections. An invoice will be sent to you following the inspection.