

FOG Program

Fats, Oils & Grease

Proper disposal of fats, oils and grease protects your business, public health and the environment. It's the law, and it's the right thing to do.



It's cheaper and easier to prevent than clean up



Grease clog in sewer.

FOG buildup can clog sewer and drainage pipes, resulting in messy, costly **overflows**. It's bad for business, the environment and public health. Costs of a raw sewage backup may include:

- **Loss of business** while you're closed to clean up and get the kitchen back into service
- **Cleanup** of the premises by staff and a cleaning or restoration service
- **Hiring** a service to clean the sewer lines
- **Repairs or replacement** of the building, fixtures, and equipment
- **Reimbursement** for damages to neighbors and the public sewer system
- **Higher** insurance premiums
- **Fines and penalties**

Common sources of FOG

- Fried foods
- Cooking meats
- Butter, ice cream, other dairy products
- Gravy and sauces
- Mayonnaise and salad dressings

FOG myths

Myth: Restaurant workers know how to prevent FOG problems.

Fact: Few employees *have* been properly trained to handle and dispose of cooking fats, oils and grease. The owner and management are responsible to train staff in best management practices (BMPs) and *oversee* the work of contractors hired to clean, *remove* and recycle FOG.

Myth: Pour hot water and detergent or degreasers into the drain to dissolve oil or grease.

Fact: That just pushes oil or grease deep into the sewer pipe where it cools and coats the inside of the pipe. Eventually, the pipe will clog and could cause raw sewage to back up into the building.

Myth: Storm drains and catch basins are for disposal of dirty water, debris, etc.

Fact: Outside drains are built to direct stormwater runoff to the nearest creek or wetland. Using them for any other purpose is a violation of the federal Clean Water Act.

Myth: If the sewers back up, the City will fix it.

Fact: Owners are responsible for the sewers on their property. If they damage or back up the public sanitary sewer or drainage systems, they must pay for cleanup and repair and may be subject to fines and penalties.

Food service establishment inspection

An inspector from the City's Pretreatment Program will visit all food establishments to ensure they are properly managing FOG to protect the public sanitary sewer and drainage systems and water quality. Pretreatment inspectors have that title because they control pollution before it can be discharged into the sanitary sewer.

The Pretreatment inspector assesses the condition of grease removal devices and FOG management practices.



Train staff to prepare for the inspection.

Inspectors prefer to coach and counsel rather than issue penalties. Ask for their advice.

Preparing for the inspection

When the Pretreatment inspector comes to inspect your food service establishment's FOG management practices, please be prepared. Your assistance with the inspection is appreciated.

- Train staff to assist the inspector and to open and close the GRD.
- Keep maintenance records, training logs and FOG reports nearby.*
- Keep a screwdriver or Allen wrench handy to open and close the GRD.

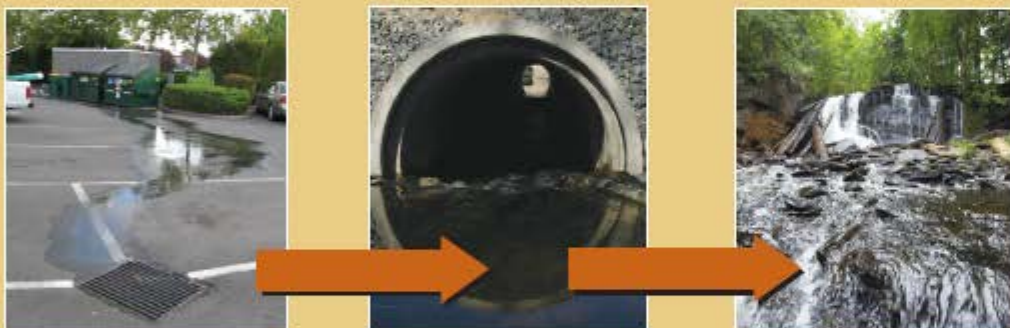


About inside and outside drains

It's important to keep FOG out of inside and outside drains to prevent sanitary sewer overflows, drainage backups and pollution of local waterways. Many people don't know that inside drains take wastewater *to the sanitary sewer system and a wastewater treatment facility*. Outside drains take stormwater runoff to pipes or ditches that lead *to the nearest wetland or creek*.



Inside drain → sanitary sewer → wastewater treatment facility



Outside storm drain/catch basin → pipe/ditch → creek or wetland

Storm drains, catch basins and sumps

The public drainage system is designed to carry stormwater runoff and protect local creeks and wetlands from water pollution. It is the food service establishment and property owner's responsibility to maintain the storm drains and catch basins on or near the business premises. The catch basin under the storm drain or grate has a compartment or sump that is designed to capture debris.



Storm drains are for rainwater. What goes in the storm drain goes straight to the nearest creek or wetland.



- Inspect and clean storm drains, catch basins and sumps that serve the establishment.
- Increase the frequency of inspections and cleanings if necessary to prevent problems.
- Properly dispose of material from the catch basin and sump.
- Keep FOG and cleaners from polluting the public drainage system, creeks and wetlands.
- Never wash or sweep liquids, suds, FOG or debris into storm drains.

Disposing of cleaning solutions or soapy water into gutters and storm drains can harm or kill wildlife, even if it's labeled nontoxic or biodegradable. Even when soap is not used, pollutants such as metals, grease and dirt are washed into drains and are harmful to aquatic organisms and wildlife.

Failure to properly clean and maintain the system can result in costly overflows, cleanup, business interruptions or closure. If the public drainage system is clogged or damaged, or pollutants reach waterways due to poor maintenance, the owner may be fined and required to pay cleanup costs.

It is the owner's responsibility to know if the debris cleaned from the catch basin qualifies as a hazardous material that must be handled separately from regular waste. Contact the City of Helena for advice.



Grease Removal Devices (GRDs)

All food service establishments that are connected to the public sewer system should have an approved Grease Removal Device (GRD). GRDs must be properly sized, installed and maintained to keep FOG and food debris out of the sewer system. If your business does not have adequate GRDs, you may be required to install them.

A GRD is designed to capture oil and grease from wastewater before it gets to the public sewers. If there is a grease interceptor outside, it is a vault with much larger capacity and several compartments where the grease cools and congeals. GRDs need regular inspection and cleaning.

GRDs are inspected by City Pretreatment staff. The City of Helena is a public utility that enforces the federal Clean Water Act and related state and local laws.



Kitchens generate a lot of FOG.

GRDs prevent backups that damage your plumbing and the public sanitary sewer and drainage systems.

Caring for GRDs

GRDs cannot function properly if they are filled with grease and lose efficiency when only 15% full. The recommended cleaning frequency varies by the type of food and kitchen cleaning practices.

- Properly install, maintain and clean GRDs.
- Clean grease traps (inside) every week, and more often if necessary.
- Clean grease vaults (outside) every six months, and more often if necessary.
- Keep GRDs at less than 25% full of grease and debris.
- Train staff to oversee the work of contractors to ensure they use BMPs and comply with the law.

The property and business owners are responsible for the proper installation, maintenance and cleaning of inside and outside GRDs. The business may hire contractors to provide rendering, recycling, and exhaust/vent/hood cleaning services.

A well-maintained GRD is easier to keep clean and prevents odors.



Oversee contractors for complete, correct service.



Exhaust hoods, vents and filters

This booklet does not fully address grease removal in exhaust and fire prevention fixtures and equipment such as the exhaust system hoods, vents and filters. Still, this equipment must be cleaned and maintained to prevent fires and greasy build up on the roof that could leak or be washed into storm drains.

- Clean vent hoods and filters.
- Inspect the exhaust system often enough to prevent grease buildup.
- Maintain the grease collection unit on the roof to protect your business and avoid penalties.
- Hire a service to clean and maintain the exhaust hoods, vents and filters frequently.



Exhaust systems must be FOG free.



Is your staff trained in Best Management Practices (BMPs)?

It's easy to keep FOG out of the sewer and drainage systems if employees are trained in best management practices (BMPs). Make sure staff and management understand how to use the BMPs and tips in this booklet to keep drains and pipes flowing.

Proper disposal of Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG)

Kitchen FOG belongs in the trash, a GRD or a recycling container. Keep FOG in its place and out of the plumbing and public sewer and drainage systems.



GRD too full of FOG and not maintained properly.

- Recycle cooking grease, oil and food wastes.
- Contact your waste hauler or a rendering company to get a waste oil container.
- If containers or bins leak or spill, ask the vendor for new ones.
- Cover the rendering container with a roof if possible.
- Clean up any spills or leaks immediately using dry methods.
- Prevent odor, rats and other pests with clean, closed rendering containers and dumpsters.
- Never dump used cooking oil down the drain.
- Never use hot water, detergent or degreasers to flush FOG down the drain; this pushes grease into the pipe where it will cool, congeal and clog the sewer.
- Never dump FOG (or anything!) on the street, parking lot or into storm drains.
- Schedule frequent FOG pickup or service.
- Keep records of training, cleaning, service, preventative maintenance and inspections.

Dry clean up

Before washing with water, use dry clean up methods to control FOG and food waste.

- Scrape or wipe instead of washing food waste from utensils, fixtures and equipment.
- Use rubber scrapers to remove FOG from cookware and serving surfaces.
- Scrape food waste into trash bins with plastic liners.
- Soak up oil and grease under fryer baskets with paper.
- Sweep floors before mopping.
- Wipe down work areas with paper towels.
- Place disposal and recycling containers in easy reach for kitchen employees.
- Sweep instead of hosing down parking lots, sidewalks and outside areas.

Dry clean up methods have many benefits. Dry floors are safer than slick floors that may cause employees to slip and fall.



Dry wipe before washing.



Sweep floors before mopping.



TIP Proper disposal of FOG is easier and cheaper—and that's good for your bottom line.



TIP Dry clean up saves water and energy costs.

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Dishwashing, work areas, floors and spills

After dry scraping, wiping and sweeping, use these BMPs to keep FOG and food waste out of drains and sewers.

- Keep work areas clean.
- Install screens, baskets or strainers in sink and floor drains to catch food debris.
- Prewash with cold water.
- Wash floor mats and greasy equipment in an area that drains to an approved GRD—not outside.
- Never pour grease or oil into sinks, floor drains or onto a parking lot or street.
- Never mop or force food debris down the drain.
- Keep liquid waste out of trash or dumpster bins.
- Train workers how to put FOG into recycling or rendering containers.
- Prevent spills by proper storage, handling and transfer of supplies.
- Provide proper equipment to handle FOG.
- Be careful not to drop or splash fats, oils and grease.
- Keep a spill kit with absorbent materials nearby.
- Clean up spills immediately.



Keep FOG and food waste out of drains.

Storage, trash and recycling areas

Well-run food service establishments keep their storage and trash areas as neat and clean as the kitchen.

- Store waste oil and cleaners in closed containers indoors or under cover outside.
- Provide dumpsters and bins that are large enough not to overflow.
- Repair or replace leaky dumpsters, trash bins and compactors.
- Close dumpster lids.
- Immediately clean up any spills or leaks.



Trash and recycling areas reflect your kitchen practices.



Standing water due to clogged drains can damage pavement.



Proper maintenance reduces costly repairs.

It's the law, and it's good business



Grease clog inside a pipe.

Sewer overflows are harmful to public health and the environment. Federal, State and Local laws require FOG control to protect people and water sources. It is the business and property owner's responsibility to comply with the law and ensure that employees and contractors are using BMPs that protect the public sanitary sewer, drainage systems and water quality. Property and business owners may be held liable for water quality violations, misuse of the public sanitary sewer and drainage systems, and resulting water pollution.

Did you know?

- Storm drains are for clean rainwater only.
- Obstruction of public sewers may result in penalties, fines and other costs.

For more information,
please contact:



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