



Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) in Our Sewers

Why Are Fats, Oils and Grease a Problem in our Sewers?

Fats, oils and grease (FOG) are found in food scraps, meat fats, lard, oil, margarine, butter, baked goods, sauces and dairy products. FOG from food preparation establishments is a major source of waste in municipal sewers.

- FOG washed down sinks and floor drains builds up over time and eventually creates clogs in the restaurant's sewer line as well as the city sewer system.
- Cleaning clogs caused by FOG out of private and public property leads to increased costs for maintaining the restaurant's sewer line and for Department of Public Works, the operator of the sewer system.
- When FOG is disposed of improperly, it can also cause sewer backups. Backups may expose Anne Arundel County Government to costly environmental penalties.

Why Should FOG Matter To You?

- Sewer backups and clogs attract insects and vermin and create health hazards.
- FOG will eventually clog up the restaurant sewer lateral, causing the plumbing to back up. Sewer backups can result in property damage and various code violations. Such violations can lead to assessed cleaning and administrative costs to the restaurant for cleaning out the sewers.
- Clogged sewers can cause sewer overflows, which release untreated sewage into our rivers and streams.
- FOG is a valuable resource. When recycled rather than dumped down the drain, FOG can be sold to rendering companies for use in soaps, fertilizers and animal feeds.

Improper FOG Disposal Is Costly at a Time When We Can Least Afford It

- Increased sewer clogs, backups and overflows lead to extra maintenance and repairs for the restaurant and for Department of Public Works.
- Increased costs for Anne Arundel County Government mean increased costs for ratepayers.
- Annual FOG-related preventative maintenance and treatment costs include: direct labor, equipment and disposal expenses within the sewer system and at the treatment plants.

What is Required?

Section 13-5-504 of the Anne Arundel County Code states: A user may not discharge into the County system: (i) when FOG wastes are such that they could solidify at normal wastewater temperatures and contribute to sewer line clogging, skimming and grease-handling equipment overload, or treatment process interference in accordance with the following: grease interceptors and oil separators shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the County Plumbing Code and grease and oil wastes may not be discharged into the County system. For more information on proper installation and sizing of grease interceptors, contact the Bureau of Utilities at [\(410\) 222-8818](tel:4102228818) or email pwcust00@aaacounty.org.

Fees for Commercial Businesses

Licensed food establishments are a significant source of FOG in municipal sewers. As part of ongoing efforts to maintain and improve public infrastructure as well as protect public health and the environment, Section 13-5-508 outlines (c) Permit fee. The permit fee is: (4) for users required to have and maintain a grease interceptor or oil separator, \$100 per application; and (d) Administrative fee. The annual administrative fee is: (4) for users required to have or maintain a grease interceptor or oil separator, \$100. The Supplemental Plumbing Code requires all food handlers at commercial facilities to install exterior grease interceptors. The pretreatment program only addresses commercial/nonresidential facilities on the public sewer. For additional information about these fees, call the Bureau of Utilities at (410) 222-8818.

Best Management Practices To Reduce FOG In Our Sewers

- “Dry wipe” pots, pans and dishware before washing to minimize the discharge of FOG and solids.
- Ensure that a manager oversees all grease trap/interceptor cleaning and maintenance activities to ensure that the devices are operating properly.
- Monitor outside grease interceptors regularly and clean them when FOG reaches 25 percent of the grease interceptor’s depth.
- Monitor inside grease traps monthly and clean them at least once every three months.
- Dispose of food wastes by solid waste removal or composting rather than using garbage disposals.
- Keep a log of maintenance activities to help demonstrate compliance with Section 17 of the Sewage Disposal Service Terms and Conditions and the use of best management practices.

For more information on managing fats, oils and grease discharges, contact Department of Public Works at aacounty.org/public-works/fog or call (410) 222-7500.