

Fats, Oils, Grease (FOG)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



What is FOG?

Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) are a byproduct of cooking, food and drink preparation, and meat preparation. FOG is generated from meat fats, shortening, butter, margarine, sauces, and dairy products. When these products are washed down the drain from cookware, utensils and other means, they can impact plumbing and sewer collection system.

Why is FOG an issue for my business?

FOG present in wastewater can block plumbing and sewer lines. When FOG cools down, it congeals and hardens, and will build up on the inside of pipes and sewer lines. The build up of FOG will eventually block the line and potentially result in sewer overflows into businesses, nearby homes and local waterways, potentially causing a loss of business and severe public health impacts such as cholera, dysentery and hepatitis. Overflows impacting public health, wastewater, and storm drains may result in expensive cleanup costs as well as fines from regulatory agencies.

Am I subject to the General Permit?

If you are a Class III or IV Food Preparation Establishment (FPE) and you discharge to a sanitary sewer, you are subject to the General Permit for the Discharge of Wastewater Associated with Food Preparation Establishments (General Permit). Class III and IV FPEs include but are not limited to restaurants, hotel kitchens, hospital and school cafeterias, taverns and cafes, factory cafeterias, church kitchens, bakeries and special club kitchens.

Must I comply with the General Permit?

All class III and IV FPEs who discharge to the sanitary sewer must comply with the General Permit. Failure to do so may result in daily fines and revocation of food services licenses.

Is my business required to have a grease removal device?

Your municipality and the Department of Environmental Protection require installation of grease removal devices if you are a Class III or IV FPE and you discharge to a sanitary sewer.

What is the difference between Automatic Grease Recovery Units and Interceptors?

An interceptor is a large tank partitioned to remove grease and food waste by trapping floating FOG and settling particulates at the bottom by gravity. An automatic grease recovery unit (AGRU) is a smaller unit, often stainless steel that uses mechanical means to skim floating FOG and gravity to settle solids. Usually interceptors are installed in the ground outside a food service facility, and AGRUs are installed indoors, often under a counter or in the floor.

What will authorized agents be looking for?

The authorized agents will inspect FPEs for compliance with the General Permit. They will verify that the food and drink service establishment are implementing Best Management Practices for controlling FOG, and have installed compliant FOG removal devices

Are there any fees involved?

The establishment owner is financially responsible for all charges including installation, maintenance, pumping, disposal and repair of treatment systems. The establishments are also responsible for any fines or clean up costs associated with overflows or stoppages.