

HOUSEHOLD AND COMMERCIAL GREASE

Fats, Oils, and Grease aren't just bad for your arteries and your waistline; they're bad for sewers too.

Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage home interiors, and threaten the environment. An increasingly common cause of overflows is sewer pipes blocked by grease. Grease gets into the sewer from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and businesses.

Information for this brochure was taken from the Water Environment Federation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Where does the grease come from?

Most of us know grease as the byproduct of cooking. Grease is found in such things as meat fats, lard, cooking oil, shortening, butter and margarine, and dairy products.

Too often, grease is washed into the plumbing system, usually through the kitchen sink. Grease sticks to the insides of sewer pipes (both on your property and the public sewer). Over time, the grease can build up and block the entire pipe.

Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system. These units only shred solid material into smaller pieces and do not prevent grease from going down the drain. Commercial additives and degreasers, including detergents, that claim to dissolve grease may pass grease down the line and promote hardening which may cause problems in other areas.

The results can be: Raw sewage overflowing into your home or your neighbor's home; An expensive and unpleasant cleanup that often must be paid for by you, the homeowner; Raw sewage overflowing into yards, parks, creeks, and streets; Potential contact with disease-causing organisms; and An increase in operation and maintenance for the wastewater department which could result in higher bills for customers.

What we can do to help

The easiest way to solve the grease problem and help prevent overflows of raw sewage is to keep this material out of the sewer system in the first place.

Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets. Place collected grease in containers in the trash.

Scrape grease and food scraps from plates, pans, and cooking surfaces into the trash.

Do not put grease down garbage disposals.

What restaurants and Building Owners need to know

Restaurants, large buildings, and other commercial establishments are required to have grease traps or interceptors that keep grease out of the sewer system. For a grease trap to work correctly, it must be properly designed, installed, and maintained. Solids should never be put into grease traps or interceptors. Routine, often daily, maintenance is needed to prevent blockages.