

A FACT SHEET FOR THE PROPER DISPOSAL OF FAT, OIL, & GREASE



An easy and important way we can have an impact on the environment is by properly disposing of fats, oil and grease, also known as FOG. FOG causes sewer blockages, leading to spills and overflows that are hazardous to our health; can result in damage to our homes; pollute our local waterways and groundwater; and harm fish and wildlife habitats. The good news is, community members like us have the power to easily prevent damage from FOG, contributing to a better quality of life here in North Carolina.

What is FOG?

FOG includes animal fats, vegetable fats, and oils used to cook and prepare food. FOG is a solid or viscous substance, which will ultimately create an obstruction in the sewer system if not properly disposed. Restaurants deal with larger volumes of FOG than homeowners and renters, but we all need to do our part.

Sewer Blockage Formation



The start of a blocked pipe begins when grease and solids collect on the top and sides of the pipe interior.



The build-up increases over time when grease and other debris are washed down the drain.



Excessive accumulation will restrict the flow of wastewater and can result in a sanitary sewer overflow.

Where does FOG come from?

A byproduct of cooking, FOG comes from meat, fats, lard, oil, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, sauces, and dairy products. When washed down the drain, FOG sticks to the insides of sewer pipes. Over time, FOG can build up, block entire pipes, and lead to serious problems.

What happens when FOG isn't properly disposed?

A wastewater sewer system works similarly to the circulatory system of the human body. Wastewater flows through pipes, is pumped at pump stations, and is cleaned by the wastewater plant. FOG creates blockages within the sewer system that can lead to system failure as it builds up.

Tips for Handling Fats, Oils, and Greases

In Your Home

- Use an old coffee can or jar as a grease container
- Pour greasy or oily food waste in the container, NOT down the drain or garbage disposal
- Freeze/cool animal fats before throwing in the trash.
- Mix liquid vegetable fats with cat litter or coffee grounds in a sealable container before throwing in the trash.

Restaurants & Food Service Establishments

- Put oil and grease in collection containers
- Remove oil and grease from kitchen utensils, pots, pans and food preparation areas with scrapers, towels, brooms
- Keep grease out of wash water
- Place food scraps in collection containers



Wipe FOG residue from pans or dishes with a paper towel before washing.



Pour FOG into a container. When full, throw it in the trash.



Place a strainer in the sink drain to catch food scraps and other solids.



Don't pour FOG into your sink or toilet.



Don't let food scraps and solids go down the drain.