

FOG - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is FOG and why should I care?

FOG refers to fats, oil and grease that are generated from normal business operations of food service establishments (FSEs).

FOG is produced by restaurants, cafeterias, delis, bakeries, daycares, assisted living facilities, social halls and residential homeowners – basically, anyone who deals with food preparation, especially while cooking.

Common sources of FOG include meat fats, dairy products, food scraps, cooking oils, baked goods, sauces, dressings, sandwich spreads, gravies, marinades, dairy products, shortening, lard, butter, margarine, etc.

FOG is commonly washed into the plumbing system during food preparation or clean-up through the kitchen sink. As it travels, it congeals and decreases pipe capacity both inside the FSE and in the main sewer system. FOG can block your drain, your neighbor's drain and main collection lines, potentially becoming an environmental and public health risk.

FOG gets into the sewers mainly from commercial food preparation establishments that do not have adequate grease control measures in place, such as grease interceptors.

What are the costs associated with FOG?

To your business: As your sewer pipes back up, the sewage and food particles that accumulate can attract insects and other vermin, cause unpleasant odors, and could create health hazards. Property damage can also result from sewage backups and lead to expensive cleanup and plumbing repairs. Health code violations or closures can greatly impact your business.

To the Environment: Clogged sewers can lead to overflows. As sewage overflows onto streets, it enters the storm drain system and is carried to our local creeks and waterways, creating health risks for swimmers, fish and plant life.

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To the City: Increased sewer blockages and overflows lead to costly maintenance and can result in severe fines from State regulatory agencies. This can increase your sewer fees.

Why shouldn't FOG go down the drain?

When FOG is released into the sewer lines in any amounts, it poses a serious threat to the City's sanitary sewer collection system's ability to remove waste from our community. FOG sticks to the sides of pipes decreasing the pipe's capacity and eventually blocking the pipe entirely. This requires our sewer piping to be cleaned more often and equipment replacement due to grease related damages.

Why is the issue of SSOs (Sanitary Sewer Overflows) important?

Overflowing sewers release bacteria, viruses and other pathogens that may be hazardous to human health. The sewage may be released into your business or home, or into our waterways, streets and parks. SSOs are unpleasant and expensive to clean up, and if they occur on your property, it is you, the property owner, who is responsible for the clean-up.