

Town of Faison: Residential Outreach

Fats, Oil and Grease (FOG)

Is fat, oil and grease (FOG) a problem?

YES! Fats, oils and grease (FOG) do not mix with water (it is insoluble) and has a tendency to separate from a liquid solution. When fats, oils and grease are poured down the drain, it sticks to the sewer pipe walls creating layers of buildup that restrict the wastewater flow. This problem requires pipes to be cleaned more frequently, causes pipes to be replaced sooner than expected, and causes blockages that can result in sewer overflows.

How does fat, oil and grease (FOG) create a sewer blockage?

Fats, oils and grease in a warm liquid form may appear to be harmless since it flows easily down the drain. However, as the liquid cools, the FOG solidifies and floats to the top of the other liquid in the sewer pipes. The layer of FOG sticks to the sewer pipes and over time, the flow of wastewater becomes restricted and can cause a backup or overflow.

Picture this. Over time, FOG accumulates in the sewer system in much the same way that cholesterol accumulates in our arteries. As FOG builds in the pipes wastewater becomes increasingly restricted. Suddenly, sometimes without warning, a sewer pipe backs up and overflows (similar to a heart attack). The result is a home flooded with sewage or sewage overflowing in the street, where it flows-untreated-into area waterways.

What products contain fats, oils and/or grease (FOG)?

Fats, oils and grease are natural by-products of the cooking and food preparation process. Common sources include food scraps, meat fats, cooking oils, lard, baked goods, salad dressings, sauces, marinades, dairy products, shortening, butter and margarine.

What can I do to keep fats, oils and grease (FOG) out of the sewer and help prevent a grease related sewer overflow from occurring in my house or on my street?

Everyone plays a role in preventing FOG from damaging our sewer system. The following easy tips can help prevent a sewer overflow in your home or neighborhood.

1. Fats, oils and grease should NEVER be poured down the sink. Sink drains and garbage disposals are not designed to properly handle these materials.
2. Before washing, scrape and dry wipe pots, pans and dishes with paper towels and dispose of materials in the trash.
3. Pour fats, oils and grease into a disposable container, such as an empty glass jar or coffee can. Once the liquid has cooled and solidified, secure the lid and place the container in the trash.
4. Avoid relying on the garbage disposer to get rid of food scraps. The garbage disposer chops up food into small pieces, but can still cause a blockage in the pipe. Use sink strainers to catch food items, then empty the strainer into the trash.

Why is it important to properly dispose of FOG?

Sewer system maintenance in neighborhoods that experience sewer blockages and backups due to fats, oils and grease is expensive and can contribute to the amount that customers pay for sewer service. A sewer blockage or backup can also result in expensive repairs to the home.

Special Note for Restaurants & Residents with a Food Preparation License or Any Establishment Handling and Preparing Food

You **must** have a grease trap or interceptor installed to keep grease out of the sewer system, remember that it must be cleaned frequently. Never put solid scraps into a grease trap or interceptor. Routine – even daily – maintenance is key to prevent sewer blockages. Remember that grease dissolving products simply pass grease down the pipes where it can still clog.