

Grease Disposal Guide:

What should you know?

Do you own a restaurant or bar?

Are you a luncheon truck vendor?

Are you a homemaker interested in learning how to properly dispose of grease?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, these guidelines will be beneficial to you and could avoid possible fines and penalties.

Grease: What's the big deal?

You'll be surprised to know that one of the biggest problems for the city's sewer system is common grease, oil, and fats from cooking.

One big problem occurs when cooking grease is poured into sinks, tubs, or storm drains. A significant amount of grease also gets into the sewer system when commercial establishments wash cooking equipment and hose floors.

Greases, oils, and fats are hydrophobic ("water fearing" in Greek) compounds. This means that they will not dissolve in water.

Therefore, grease will never dissolve into the water in the sewer system. It has a tendency to stick to water-free surfaces, and comes together into small globules inside water. Since it's lighter than water, it floats also. Inside a sewer system, grease builds and blocks sewers. If sewers are blocked completely, sewage backs up and spills out, often into homes and businesses.

Whether it is cleaning up blocked sewer lines, disposing of grease from sewers, cleaning up sewage spills on streets, or handling increased content load at the water pollution control plant, grease build-up and blockage in the sewer system can translate into very high costs for us. Ultimately, you pay the bill. Higher costs are transferred to customers through higher water and sewer bills.

Cleaning up grease is expensive and you pay the bill.

Though widely advertised, soaps, detergents, caustic agents, and "wonder bugs" do little to combat grease. Soaps and detergents surround grease and allow it to slide through pipes. Inside the sewer system, grease cools and returns to its original state forming a mass of grease and clogging the system.

Caustic chemicals blend with grease to soften it, but only temporarily. Eventually, inside the sewer system, the grease returns to its original state. In addition, caustic chemicals can cause serious damage to your water pipes.

There are several types of "wonder bugs" or grease eating bacteria on the market. Don't be fooled by them. They don't work. The bugs aren't in a living state inside the bottle, and they don't have the warm temperatures and smooth flow they need in the sewer system to be effective against grease.

Your grease is your responsibility.

Remember that if a container of cooking oil or grease disposed improperly is traced back to a business that you own, you will be billed for the cost of facility repair, sampling and clean up. You will have to pay hefty fines, and could even be forced to close your business. So how should you deal with your grease problems? Listed below are some procedures that you should be following.

What you should do:

For Homes: You must ensure that all animal fats and other greases are disposed of as solid waste, such as in a garbage bag or hauled away by the Sanitation Department.

For Commercial Establishments: Restaurants and other businesses dealing with significant amounts of grease must install devices such as grease traps. A grease trap is a device designed to prevent grease, oil, solids, and other debris from entering the sewer system.

Grease traps should be checked periodically for backups, foul odors, and high Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand levels to ensure that they are functioning correctly. A reliable pumper should also pump the trap out to

remove collected oil and grease at regular intervals. Remember that the grease trap is meant solely to handle the grease that inevitably gets into the drains from washing dishes and cooking utensils. It does not allow you to dump your grease into the drains.

You should have a contract with a reputable cooking oil disposal and recycling service providers who must give you a service agreement stating how often, where, and what quantities are involved in the disposal of your cooking oil and greases. Do not take the services of a friend or neighbor who offers to take the grease off your hands for a "small fee."

There is no "miracle" solution for grease.

Choose rendering services that provide cleanup responses to accidental spills of cooking oil and grease at your business. Choose a company that will remove waste from and clean grease traps. The same rendering provider may provide this service also, or you may have to look for a different one.

Do some research and find the best cooking oil and grease disposal service to suit your needs. Two firms that provide these services are:

Darling Rendering Services (800) 914-1221

MOPAC (Greaseland)

(800) 967-8325, extension 3206



For more information, contact the Philadelphia Water Department at (215) 685-6300.