

## City of Palmdale F.O.G. Control Program

<b>What is this program?</b>	The Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Control Program is designed to reduce the number of sewer pipe blockages and related overflows by educating residents about properly disposing of fats, oils and grease.
<b>What food items are considered fats, oils and grease?</b>	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.
<b>Why is it important to properly dispose of fats, oils and grease?</b>	Preventing grease-related sewer blockages and overflows benefits your home, your pocketbook and the environment. The build up of fats, oils and grease in the sewer system eventually results in sewer backups that can overflow onto streets and even into homes, damaging properties and the environment. Most of the grease-related sewer blockages and overflows occur in residential areas. Sewer system maintenance in neighborhoods that experience sewer blockages due to fats, oils and grease is expensive and can contribute to the amount that customers pay for sewer service.
<b>What are the proper methods for disposing of fats, oils and grease in the kitchen?</b>	<b>Proper disposal is easy!</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Fats, oils and grease should <b>never</b> be poured down the sink. Sink drains and garbage disposals are not designed to properly handle these materials.</li><li>2. Before washing, scrape and dry wipe pots, pans and dishes with paper towels and dispose of materials in the trash. <b>Do not</b> use cloth towels or rags to scrape plates or clean greasy or oily dishware. When you wash them, the grease will end up in the sewer.</li><li>3. Pour fats, oils and grease after it has cooled into a container, such as an empty glass jar or coffee can. Once the container is full, secure the lid and place it in the trash. For large volumes, contact your local agency for recycling options.</li><li>4. Use sink strainers to catch food items and then empty the strainer into the trash.</li></ol>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Are fats, oils and grease (FOG) a problem?**

YES! FOG is responsible for more than half of the City's sewer problems. When poured down the drain, FOG clogs the sewer system and causes backups or overflows. The result:

- Property damage
- Increased sewer assessment rates
- Health and environmental hazards
- Increased maintenance for cleaning messes and replacing sewer pipes
- Oil and grease also hamper effective treatment at the wastewater treatment plant. Grease in a warm liquid may not appear harmful. But, as the liquid cools, the grease or fat congeals and causes mats to form on the surface of settling tanks, digesters, and the interior of pipes and other surfaces which may cause a shutdown of wastewater treatment processes.

### **How does FOG create a sewer blockage?**

When poured down the drain, FOG cools, solidifies and floats to the top of other liquids in sewer pipes. The FOG layer sticks to the sewer pipes and, over time, restricts wastewater flow. It can then cause a sewer backup or overflow.

### **What products contain FOG?**

Common sources include food scraps, meat fats, cooking oils, lard, baked goods, salad dressings, sauces, marinades, dairy products, shortening, butter and margarine.

### **Why is it important to properly dispose of FOG?**

Cleaning up FOG-related messes is expensive. It can increase the amount customers pay for sewer service. A sewer backup or overflow can also result in expensive home repairs, environmental/health hazards and pest problems.

### **What should I do if I experience a sewer backup or overflow?**

Check to see if sewage is overflowing in the street. If so, call the City at 661-267-5338. If not, then you should call a licensed plumber to assist you.

### **Are there any tips for deep-frying a turkey?**

Yes! Turkey deep-frying often leaves behind three to five gallons of used cooking oil. Follow these steps to safely dispose of used oil:

- Let the oil cool completely. Pour the oil into its original container or another leak-proof container.
- Label the container "Used Cooking Oil."
- Take the used cooking oil to a disposal station or contact Waste Management at 661-947-7197 for recycling options.
- For smaller volumes (less than a quart), allow the oil to cool and solidify. Scrape it into the trash. Hint: add kitty litter to the oil. The litter will absorb the oil and form clumps for tossing in your garbage. Recycling the used oil is preferred.

### **How and where do I properly dispose of larger quantities of cooking oil?**

Once cooled, pour FOG into a sealed container. Label the container "Used Cooking Oil" and deliver it to a disposal station.

### **What is a grease trap and how does it work?**

A grease trap is a small reservoir built into the wastewater piping a short distance from

the grease producing area (typically the kitchen area). It is designed for the purpose of removing fats, oils, and grease and preventing them from entering the sanitary sewer system. Baffles in the grease trap reservoir hold the wastewater long enough for the grease to congeal and rise to the surface. The grease can then be removed and disposed of properly.

#### What is a grease interceptor?

An interceptor is an outdoor, underground vault, typically with a capacity of 500 gallons or more, designed for the purpose of removing fats, oils, and grease and preventing them from entering the sanitary sewer system. The vaults have a two or three compartment system. The wastewater flows between each compartment and is given enough time to cool, allowing any remaining grease to congeal and rise to the surface.

#### Can you recommend a maintenance schedule?

City Code specifies that grease interceptors must be cleaned at least quarterly and grease traps must be cleaned at intervals of no more than 90 days. It is best to clean grease traps weekly. If the trap or interceptor is routinely at or above 25% combined FOG and solids, then the cleaning frequency needs to be increased.

#### Do I need a grease trap or interceptor?

If you discharge FOG to the sewer system then it is likely that you will be required to install either a grease trap or a grease interceptor.

#### Who determines if I need a grease trap or interceptor?

During new construction or remodel the building department may require you to install a grease trap or grease interceptor in accordance with the current plumbing code. Businesses in existing spaces may be required to install a grease trap or grease interceptor by the sewer utility in order to comply with their FOG Control Plan.

#### What are the criteria for inspecting grease traps?

Grease trap and grease interceptor inspections follow the same standard guidelines. The inspector will check that the system is functioning properly. The depth of the sediment and grease layers will be checked. If the combined grease and sediment layers equal or exceed 25% of the trap or interceptor capacity, the device will need to be cleaned. The inspector may also ask to see the maintenance and cleaning records for the trap or interceptor.

### History

- In 1962, during incorporation the City of Palmdale Council determined that they did not have the financial or staffing capability to operate and maintain the City owned sewer system. This service was being provided through the Consolidated Sewer Maintenance District (CSMD), a special district governed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and staffed by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.

- Therefore, the City Council authorized the CSMD to continue to operate and maintain the collection system for the Palmdale service area, including any new infrastructure added to the system from that date forward.
- The City retained its ownership rights to these facilities and to any facilities that would be constructed and accepted in the future.
- March 2008, the City Council adopted a resolution requesting withdrawal of the City of Palmdale from the Consolidated Sewer Maintenance District (CSMD) effective July 1, 2009.
- The State Water Resources Control Board adopted the Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Systems, Order Number 2006-0003 in May 2006.
- June 2009, The City adopted Ordinance No. 1376 that provided authority to control the discharge of fats, oils and grease (FOG) from industrial and commercial establishments. These changes conform with new requirements from the Waste Discharge Regulations of the State Water Resources Control Board for dischargers to the City collection system.