



Grease traps like this one are installed between kitchen fixtures (like 3 bay sinks) and the building sewer, and collect grease. If not maintained, the grease laden wastewater bypasses the trap and goes out to the sewer. The grease eventually congeals and leads to sewer blockages.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

The easiest way to solve the problem and help prevent overflows of raw sewage is keep grease out of the sewer system in the first place.

There are several ways to do this:

1. **NEVER** pour grease down sink drains or into toilets. Dispose of grease appropriately.
2. Scrape grease and food scraps from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, grills, and cooking services into a can or trash for disposal.
3. **DO NOT** put grease down garbage disposals. Put baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other

solids, and empty the drain baskets/strainers into the trash for disposal.

4. Follow best management practices for cleaning exhaust hoods, traps, and filters.
5. **NEVER** "Hot Flush" oil and grease down sewers and drains.

More information can be found and downloaded at:

<https://www.salemma.gov/city-engineer/pages/fat-oils-grease-fog>



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Trimming the Fat Out of Our Sewers

A Restaurant & Building Owner's Guide to: Understanding the Effects of Fats, Oils, & Grease in Salem's Sewer Systems



BOARD OF HEALTH
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES
INSPECTIONAL SERVICES
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

Fats, oils, and grease aren't just bad for your arteries; they're bad for sewers, too.

Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage property, and threaten the environment. A growing reason for overflows nationwide is sewer pipes blocked by grease. Grease gets into the sewer from sewer drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.



WHERE DOES THE GREASE COME FROM?

Grease in sewers is most commonly produced as a cooking by-product. Grease has many sources, such as:

- Food Scraps
- Meat Fats
- Lard
- Cooking Oil
- Shortening
- Butter and Margarine
- Baking Goods
- Sauces
- Dairy Products
- Salad Dressings

THE RESULTS CAN BE:

- Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs): Discharges of sewage in public and private areas
- Sewage backups in homes and businesses
- Sewage overflowing into Salem's waterways and sensitive environmental areas
- Potential contact with disease-causing organisms
- Increased facility maintenance cost from clogged sewers and potential loss of revenue from closures due to sewer backups
- Cleanup from backups is expensive and is paid directly by you, if in your service, or indirectly through higher water/sewer fees, if in the City sewer main.
- Penalties issued to Salem by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other regulatory agencies for occurrences of SSOs

POINTS OF ENTRY:

Sewer System Grease reaches the sewer system typically through sinks and floor drains. Grease sticks to the insides of pipes. Over time, grease can build up and block the pipe, resulting in a backup. The service pipe, between your building and the City's sewer main, is owned and maintained by the building owner. Therefore, keeping grease out of the sewer benefits the building owner directly.

Garbage disposals can also be sources of grease. These units only shred solid material into smaller pieces and do not prevent grease from going down the drain.

Commercial additives, including detergents, that claim to dissolve grease may pass grease down the line and can cause problems in other areas, and are prohibited in Salem.

Drainage System Exhaust hoods and their components that are not regularly cleaned can collect grease over time. Excess grease should be scraped into the trash and the components cleaned in a sink connected to a grease trap. Exhaust hoods should not be cleaned outside where flow can enter the storm drain.

Leaking dumpsters can also be a way for grease to enter the drainage system. To help avoid this, dumpster plugs should be kept in place and inspected regularly. Additionally, the dumpster should be covered to prevent rain from washing through the trash and should be located away from any driveway or parking lot drains.

WHAT MAINTENANCE IS REQUIRED FOR GREASE TRAPS AND INTERCEPTORS?

The city's FOG Management Program requires that all grease collection equipment be inspected and properly maintained. Cleaning is needed when the grease layer and food solid thickness is more than 25% of the available water depth. If the thickness of the grease and food layer is more than 25% of the depth, the grease trap or interceptor can no longer remove grease efficiently.

- Grease traps must be inspected once a week and cleaned at least once a month.
- Grease interceptors must be inspected once a month and cleaned at least every three months.
- Grease pumped from a grease interceptor must be managed by a certified waste hauler and brought to a facility for processing or incineration.
- A log of the inspections and cleanings must be kept by the restaurant or food service facility. These records will be checked during city inspections.

