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FAT-FREE SEWERS BROCHURE

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How to Prevent Fats, Oils, and Greases from Damaging Your Home and the Environment

Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage home interiors, and threaten the environment. An increasingly common cause of overflows is sewer pipes blocked by grease. Grease gets into the sewers from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.



Where does the grease come from?

Most of us know grease as the byproduct of cooking. Grease is found in such things as:

- Meat fats
- Lard
- Cooking oil
- Shortening
- Butter and margarine

- Food scraps
- Baking goods
- Sauces
- Dairy products

Too often, grease is washed into the plumbing system, usually through the kitchen sink. Grease sticks to the insides of sewer pipes (both on your property and in the streets). Over time, grease can build up and block the entire pipe. Even with some of the grease sticking to the pipes, the Metro District treatment plant receives almost 9 tons of grease every day.

Some people believe home garbage disposals prevent grease from going down the drain. They **do not**. Garbage disposals only shred solid material into smaller pieces.

Commercial chemicals and additives (including soaps and detergents) that claim to dissolve grease may pass grease down the line and cause problems or clog the sewer lines in other areas. Be cautious of claims to dissolve grease.

The results can be:

- Raw sewage overflowing in your home or your neighbor's home;
- An expensive and unpleasant cleanup that often must be paid for by **you, the homeowner**;

- Raw sewage overflowing into parks, yards, and streets;
- Potential contact with disease-causing organisms; and
- An increase in local sewer department operation and maintenance costs, resulting in higher sewer bills.

What we can do to help?

The easiest way is to keep this material out of the sewer system in the first place.

There are several ways to do this.

- Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets.
- Scrape grease and food scraps from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, and grills and cooking surfaces into a can or the trash for disposal (or recycling where available).
- 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.
- Speak with your friends and neighbors about the problem of grease in the sewer system and how to keep it out. Call your local sewer system authority if you have any questions.

What Restaurant and Building Owners Need to Know About Grease Traps or Interceptors

Restaurants, large buildings (such as apartment complexes), and other commercial establishments may have grease traps or interceptors that keep grease out of the sewer system. For a grease trap or interceptor to work correctly, it must be properly

- Designed (sized and manufactured to handle the amount that is expected),
- Installed (level, vented, etc.), and
- Maintained (cleaned and serviced on a frequent basis).

Solids should never be put into grease traps or interceptors. Routine, often daily, maintenance of grease traps and interceptors is needed to ensure they properly reduce or prevent blockages.

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