

# Fats, Oils, & Grease

Sewer overflows and backups are increasingly being caused by grease blocking sewers. Grease gets into the sewers from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.

Results of these overflows and backups are:

- Raw sewage overflowing in your home or your neighbor's home, damaging home interiors, an expensive and

unpleasant cleanup that you, as the homeowner, must often pay for;

- Raw sewage overflowing into yards, streets, and parks, threatening the environment;
- Potential health hazards caused by contact with disease-causing organisms;
- Higher sewer bills due to increase in local wastewater department operation and maintenance costs.

## Grease Origins

Grease is the by-product of cooking, food preparation, and cleanup. Grease is found in things such as:

- Meat fats
- Lard
- Cooking oil
- Shortening
- Butter and margarine
- Food scraps
- Baking goods
- Sauces
- Dairy products

## Proper Grease Disposal

The easiest way to keep grease out of the sewer system is not to put it there in the first place.

Scrape all grease and food scraps from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, grills, and cooking surfaces into a can or other unbreakable container.



Wipe surfaces down with paper towel.



Place can and paper towel in trash or recycling (where available).



Share this information with friends, family, and neighbors.



## Grease Mythology

Depending on your traditions, you may have disposed of grease in the following ways:

- use lots of hot water to melt it;
- use the garbage disposal and lots of cold water to break it into little pieces;
- use commercial chemicals and additives (including soaps and detergents);
- use the dishwasher to dissolve it.

If you believe any of these, you could be in for an unpleasant surprise. 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. In some cases it may just go further down the line and cause problems or clog the sewer lines in other areas.

Even with grease sticking to the pipes, every day the Metro Wastewater Reclamation District treatment plant receives up to nine tons of grease.

### **Grease Traps and Interceptors**

Restaurants, large buildings (such as apartment complexes), and other commercial establishments may have grease traps or interceptors to keep grease out of the sewer system.

For a grease trap to work correctly, it must be properly designed, installed, and maintained. Information on designing, installing, and maintaining grease traps can be obtained from your local municipal public works department.

### **Who Are We?**

The Metro Wastewater Reclamation District is the wastewater treatment authority for most of the metropolitan Denver area. It serves Arvada, Aurora, Denver, Lakewood, Thornton, part of Westminster, and more than 40 sanitation districts in Jefferson, Arapahoe, and Adams Counties.

The Metro District's treatment plant is beside the South Platte River north of Denver at approximately 64th and York Streets. It discharges treated water into the South Platte. Its 227-million-gallon-a-day capacity makes it the largest wastewater treatment plant between the Mississippi River and the west coast.

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