

Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) in our sewers

WHY SHOULD FOG MATTER TO YOU? IMPROPER FOG DISPOSAL HAS A DIRECT IMPACT ON UTILITY BILLS.

- Sewer backups and clogs attract insects and vermin and create health hazards.
- Sewer backups can result in property damage and health code violations.
- Clogged sewers can cause sewer overflows, which release untreated sewage into our rivers and streams.
- FOG is a valuable resource. When recycled rather than dumped down the drain, FOG can be sold to rendering companies for use in soaps, fertilizers, and animal feeds.
- When FOG materials are disposed of improperly they can cause sewer backups. Backups expose the city to costly environmental penalties or other remedial measures.
- FOG washed down sinks and floor drains builds up over time and eventually creates clogs.
- FOG leads to increased costs for maintaining sewers and wastewater treatment plants and cleaning grease clogs out of private and public property.
- Fats, Oils and Grease are found in food scraps, meat fats, lard, oil, margarine, butter, baking goods, sauces, and dairy products. FOG from food preparation establishments is a major source of these wastes in city sewers.

WHAT DOES THE LAWRENCE CITY CODE REQUIRE?

§ 5-1-1-4. REGULATION OF DISCHARGES TO PUBLIC SEWERS states:

(C) No person shall discharge or cause to be discharged to any City sewer wastewater or pollutants which cause, threaten to cause or are capable of causing, either alone or by interaction with other substances:

- (3) Obstruction to the flow in City sewers or other interference with the proper operation of either the City of Lawrence POTW or the City of Indianapolis' POTW;
- (6) Oils, greases, fats, acids, chemicals, iron, mineral wastes, ashes or cinders, garbage (except garbage from domestic garbage disposal units), dead animals, rags, hair or any other wastes, solid, liquid or gaseous, which may cause clogging or which may be injurious to the operation and maintenance of the sewage collection system and/or treatment works;

Restaurants and other establishments are required to install a grease interceptor (commonly known as grease traps) in the waste line leading from plumbing fixtures or equipment where grease may be introduced to the sewer system. (5-1-1-4 (g)) Grease interceptors must be properly sized, installed and maintained. In reality, many are not maintained on a regular basis. The City of Lawrence has started a program of random inspection, permitting and monitoring of restaurants and any other facilities that have commercial kitchens or other food service related activity.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO REDUCE FOG IN OUR SEWERS

The Marion County Health Department has developed the following best management practices for FOG:

- Monitor outside grease traps regularly and clean them when FOG reaches 25% of the grease trap depth.
- Monitor inside grease traps monthly and clean them at least once every three months.
- Dispose of waste cooking oil (deep fryer oil through an established recycling company and never down the drain.
- “Dry wipe” pots, pans and dishware before washing to minimize the discharge of FOG and solids.
- Dispose of food wastes by solid waste removal or composting rather than using garbage disposals.
- Verify all grease interceptor cleaning and maintenance activities by a manager or supervisor to ensure that the device is operating properly.
- Keep a log of maintenance activities to help demonstrate compliance.

For more information on managing fat, oil and grease discharges, contact the utility at (317) 524-6305. For more information on the proper installation and sizing of grease interceptors, contact the Department of Metropolitan Development at 327-5544 or 327-5552; or the Marion County Health and Hospital Corporation at (317) 221-2253.