



Des Moines Metropolitan Wastewater Reclamation Authority
3000 Vandalia Rd.
Des Moines, IA 50317-1346



To Owners and Managers of Food Service Establishments,

The WRA is committed to providing safe, cost-effective wastewater service to commercial and residential customers within our service area. We are equally dedicated to operating our wastewater system in an environmentally responsible manner. The City of Des Moines and surrounding Metropolitan cities recently adopted an ordinance to limit and control the introduction of fats, oil and grease (FOG) into the sanitary sewer system. This ordinance in its entirety can be located at www.dmgov.org following the links on the left through departments, WRF, WRA, new industrial ordinance.

The FOG ordinance is the result of a mandate from the EPA which requires each municipality to install a program of oil and grease control to aid in the prevention of sanitary sewer blockages and overflows that adversely impact public health and the environment. The requirements for food service establishments (FSEs) are as follows:

- FSEs are required to install a grease interceptor with a minimum capacity of 1000 gallons if the facility is proposed or constructed after the effective date; or if the facility is renovated to include a FSE where such FSE did not previously exist; or if an existing FSE applies for a building permit valued at \$50,000 or more; or if an existing FSE does not adequately operate and maintain existing grease removal devices or use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to meet FOG discharge limits.
- Grease Interceptors shall be cleaned, complete with a maintenance log, at three (3) month intervals or when total FOG and solids reach 25% of the design liquid level. Owner or operator of the FSE shall employ a waste hauler that is licensed and certified by the WRA.
- The introduction of enzymes, emulsifying chemicals, hot water or other agents into a grease interceptor to dissolve or emulsify grease is prohibited, unless prior written approval is received from the WRA Director.

The WRA is developing a more comprehensive grease control program to eliminate this problem, which will affect your business. During the next 18 months, a WRA representative will visit each FSE within the WRA service area to collect data on facility operation, grease control practices and distribute educational material regarding the FOG program. We will contact you to schedule a convenient time for our visit.

Studies have shown the most cost-effective way to protect the sewer system, public health and the environment from the effects of FOG is to change kitchen practices and catch FOG at the source. BMPs are a series of activities that effectively manage and control disposal of FOG waste generated from the operation of FSEs. The FOG program considers BMPs *clean kitchen* practices that focus on good housekeeping, employee training, spill control plans, recycling and proper waste disposal methods.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please call Nikki Phillips, FOG Coordinator at 515-323-8131 or Larry Hare, Industrial Pretreatment at 515-323-8010. You are a valued customer of the Des Moines Metro WRA and we appreciate your cooperation in making our cities safe for the public and our environment.

Frequent Questions Regarding FOG



What is FOG and why should I care?

FOG refers to fats, oil and grease that are generated from normal business operations of food service establishments (FSEs). Grease is commonly washed into the plumbing system through the kitchen sink and as it cools, decreases pipe capacity. FOG can block your drain, your neighbors' drain and main collection lines, which potentially become a health and environmental hazard.

Eliminating FOG-related sanitary sewer overflows is the goal of the new FOG program at the WRA. FOG Inspectors will routinely inspect kitchens and FSEs to ensure compliance with regulations. It is the responsibility of each business to develop an effective FOG waste management plan and properly dispose of FOG waste on a consistent basis.

What types of facilities are required to meet the directives of the new ordinance?

All commercial and institutional cooking establishments as well as some no-cooking FSEs will be required to meet the regulations set forth in the ordinance. This includes, but is not limited to, restaurants, bars, schools, daycares, nursing homes, bakeries, grocery stores, caterers and other food preparation operations.

Will my existing grease trap (under the sink unit) be sufficient to comply with the new ordinance?

Make sure the grease trap is sized and installed to remove the amount of grease that is expected at your FSE. Following the suggested BMPs (listed below) and routine maintenance of the trap will increase the probability of meeting discharge limits of 400 mg/L. Under the sink traps are much smaller in design and therefore need more attention to prevent the FOG from reaching the sanitary sewers. Make sure baffles are installed properly and dishwashers and garbage disposals should not be plumbed through grease traps. If the trap is not cleaned frequently or correctly it will not perform well and could put your FSE at risk of violating the city ordinance.

A few BMPs are listed for implementation at your FSE:

- ✓ Provide regular training to employees
- ✓ Dispose of food wastes into the trash
- ✓ Scrape and dry-wipe pots, pans and dishware prior to washing
- ✓ Do not pour oil directly into the drain
- ✓ Use drain screens
- ✓ Place no FOG signs near all sinks
- ✓ Inspect & clean grease traps / interceptors frequently
- ✓ Keep records of FOG pick-up by WRA certified waste haulers
- ✓ Store recyclable oil in leak-proof containers with lids
- ✓ Clean all mats and dispose of mop water through a utility sink that is connected to the grease interceptor
- ✓ Clean all vent hoods regularly

Contact information:

- Nikki Phillips, FOG Coordinator
515-323-8131 desk
515-323-8063 fax
nlphillips@dmgov.org

- Larry Hare, Regulatory Compliance Team Leader
515-323-8010 desk
515-323-8068 fax
ldhare@dmgov.org

- Royce Hammitt, WRF Treatment Manager
515-323-8001 desk
515-323-8049 fax
rwhammit@dmgov.org