

FACT SHEET

Best Management Practices for Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG)

What is FOG?

FOG stands for fats, oils, and grease.

FOG are a mixture of fats, oils, and grease from various cooking ingredients, for example:

- Meat fats
- Fatty/greasy food scraps
- Cream-based sauces
- Cooking oil
- Butter
- Margarine
- Shortening
- Lard
- Baked goods and pastries
- Mayonnaise
- Salad dressing

How does FOG enter the sewer?

FOG enters the sanitary sewer system from dishwashing, mopping, equipment sanitation, and other related activities where food is handled.

Why is FOG a problem?

Accumulations of FOG and other debris can build up over time and lead to sewer overflows, which have the potential to expose the public to raw sewage (a public health hazard) and may lead to environmental contamination of local creeks and San Francisco Bay and public health hazards.



Photo provided by UC Berkeley Facility Services: Sanitary sewer pipe cross-section with build-up of FOG; the blockage narrows the pipe and restricts the volume of water that can flow through the pipe.

How can I prevent a sewer blockage?

Practice dry clean-up

Remove food waste with “dry” methods, such as scraping, wiping, or sweeping before using “wet” methods that use water. Wet methods generally wash the water and the waste materials into the drains, where it eventually cools, congeals, and collects on the interior walls of the pipes, obstructing the flow of wastewater through our sanitary sewer.

- Use a rubber scraper to remove fats, oils, and grease from cookware, utensils, chafing dishes, and serving ware.
- Use food-grade paper to soak up oil and grease under fryer baskets.
- Wipe down work areas with paper towels (Do not use cloth towels, which will accumulate grease that eventually ends up in the drains from washing, rinsing, or laundering).

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Properly dispose of food waste

All food waste should be disposed of directly in the organic waste container.
The drain is not a trash can! Do not dispose of food waste into a sink or down a drain.

Utilize drain screens in sinks

Drain screens collect food waste that can be disposed of in the organic waste container.

Collect fats, oils, and grease in a disposable container

- Empty containers before they are full to avoid sloshing/spilling the contents.
- Use a cover to transport liquids
- Use proper tools to transport material without spilling (e.g., ladles, containers).

The drain is not a trash can

- Do not pour fats, oils, or grease or other trash or solids down the drain.
- Do not dispose of food scraps using a sink.
- Do not remove drain screens, which may allow food and other debris (e.g., paper cups, straws, utensils) to enter the plumbing system.

Questions?

Please contact us by email at ehs-ep@berkeley.edu.