

## A FACT SHEET FOR

# Best Management Practices for Fats, Oils, and Grease

*Residual fats, oils, and grease (FOG) are by-products that food service establishments must constantly manage. Typically, FOG enter a facility's plumbing system from ware washing, floor cleaning, and equipment sanitation. Sanitary sewer systems are neither designed nor equipped to handle the FOG that accumulates on the interior of the municipal sewer collection system pipes. The best way to manage FOG is to keep the material out of the plumbing systems. The following are suggestions for proper FOG management.*

### **Dry Clean-Up**

Practice dry cleanup. Remove food waste with “dry” methods such as scraping, wiping, or sweeping before using “wet” methods that use water. Wet methods typically wash the water and waste materials into the drains where it eventually collects on the interior walls of the drainage pipes.

Do not pour grease, fats, or oils from cooking down the drain

Do not use the sinks to dispose of food scraps

Likewise it is important to educate kitchen staff not to remove drain screens as this may allow paper or plastic cups, straws, and other utensils to enter the plumbing system during clean up. The success of dry cleanup is dependent upon the behavior of the employee and availability of the tools for removal of food waste before washing. To practice dry clean up:

- Use rubber scrapers 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.
- Use paper towels to wipe down work areas. Cloth towels will accumulate grease that will eventually end up in your drains from towel washing/rinsing.
- Scrape and sweep up spills before using water for cleanup.
- Post "No Grease!" signs above sinks.

### **Spill Prevention**

Preventing spills reduces the amounts of waste on food preparation and serving areas that will require clean up. A dry workplace is safer for employees in avoiding slip, trips, and falls. For spill prevention:

- Empty containers before they are full to avoid spills.
- Use a cover to transport interceptor contents to rendering barrel.

- Provide employees with the proper tools (ladles, ample containers, etc.) to transport materials without spilling.

## **Maintenance**

Maintenance is key to avoiding FOG blockages. For whatever method or technology is used to collect, filter and store FOG, ensure that equipment is regularly maintained. All staff should be aware of and trained to perform correct cleaning procedures, particularly for under-sink grease traps that are prone to break down due to improper maintenance. A daily and weekly maintenance schedule is highly recommended.

- Contract with a management company to professionally clean large hood filters. Small hoods can be hand-cleaned with spray detergents and wiped down with cloths for cleaning. Hood filters can be effectively cleaned by routinely spraying with hot water with little or no detergents over the mop sink that should be connected to a grease trap. After hot water rinse (separately trapped), filter panels can go into the dishwasher.
- Skim/filter fryer grease daily and change oil when necessary. Use a test kit provided by your grocery distributor rather than simply a “guess” to determine when to change oil. This extends the life of both the fryer and the oil. Build-up of carbon deposits on the bottom of the fryer act as an insulator that forces the fryer to heat longer, thus causing the oil to break down sooner.
- Cleaning intervals depend upon the type of food establishment involved. Some facilities require monthly or once every two months cleaning. Establishments that operate a large number of fryers or handle a large amount of fried foods such as chicken, along with ethnic food establishments may need at least monthly cleanings. Full cleaning of grease traps (removing all liquids and solids and scraping the walls) is a worthwhile investment. Remember, sugars, starches and other organics accumulate from the bottom up. If sediment is allowed to accumulate in the trap, it will need to be pumped more frequently.
- Develop a rotation system if multiple fryers are in use. Designate a single fryer for products that are particularly high in deposits, and change that one more often.

## **Oil & Grease Collection/Recycling & Food Donations**

FOG is a commodity that if handled properly can be treated as a valuable resource.

- Begin thinking of oil and grease as a valuable commodity. Some rendering companies will offer services free-of-charge and others will give a rebate on the materials collected.
- Use 25-gallon rendering barrels with covers for onsite collection of oil and grease other than from fryers. Educate kitchen staff on the importance of keeping outside barrels covered at all times. During storms, uncovered or partially covered barrels allow storm water to enter the barrel resulting in oil running onto the ground and possibly into storm drains, and can “contaminate” an otherwise useful by-product.
- Use a 3-compartment sink for ware washing. Begin with a hot pre-wash, then a scouring sink with detergent, then a rinse sink.
- Make sure all drain screens are installed.

- Prior to washing and rinsing use a hot water ONLY (no detergent) prerinse that is separately trapped to remove non-emulsified oils and greases from ware washing. Wash and rinse steps should also be trapped. Use water temperature less than 140 degrees F.
- Empty grill top scrap baskets or scrap boxes and hoods into the rendering barrel.
- Easy does it! Instruct staff to be conservative about their use of fats, oils and grease in food preparation and serving. Ensure that edible food is not flushed down your drains. Edible food waste may be donated to a local food bank. A local garbage feeder who will use food discards for feeding livestock can collect inedible food waste. Food donation is a win-win situation. It helps restaurants reduce disposal costs and it puts the food in the hands of those who can use it.