



## Fats, Oils and Grease

Best Management Practices  
Manual for Mecklenburg County

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FOG (Fats, Oils, and Grease) are detrimental to our wastewater collection and treatment systems. Grease includes oils, fats, cellulose, starch, proteins, wax, or grease, whether emulsified or not. These are substances that may solidify or become viscous at temperatures between 32 degrees Fahrenheit and 150 degrees Fahrenheit (0 degrees and 65 degrees Celsius).

A significant amount of wastewater system blockages can be traced to FOG. Wastewater collection system blockages are serious, causing sewage spills, manhole overflows, sewage backups in homes and businesses, or additional maintenance costs for wastewater treatment facilities.

**This manual is written for food service establishments to implement best management practices for FOGs.** Food service establishment (FSE) means any user engaged primarily or incidentally in the preparation of food for human or animal consumption, unless specifically excluded in this definition. This includes restaurants, motels, hotels, cafeterias, hospitals, schools, bars, delicatessens, meat processing operations, bakeries, and similar operations.

FSEs are required to have a grease interceptor or grease trap (GRD) at their facilities to limit the amount of FOG that they discharge to the wastewater treatment system. Grease interceptor or grease trap is a device used to affect the separation of grease and oils from the wastewater of a user. Such traps or interceptors may be of the outdoor or underground type normally of a 1,000-gallon capacity or more, or the under-the-counter package units which are typically less than 100-gallon capacity. For the purpose of this definition, the terms “trap” and “interceptor” are used interchangeably. The FSE must have a proper GRD sized, installed, and then properly maintained. The GRD must be cleaned by a grease hauler of the FSEs choosing. **Charlotte Water’s current grease trap policy and list of approved vendors can be found at [charlottewater.org](http://charlottewater.org)**

This manual is written to provide FSEs with information about FOG pollution prevention techniques focused on their businesses. This helps lower maintenance costs and decrease grease related SSOs (Sanitary Sewer Overflows).

## Why are Best Management Practices (BMPs) important?

BMP	Purpose	Pros
Post BMP posters in FSE areas that concern grease cleaning or areas of dish washing.	Visual reminder to staff to practice BMPs.	This can prevent any violations with your wastewater authority and keep FOG out of the restaurant's lines.
Dispose of used cooking Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) with a rendering recycled waste container.	FOG that has not contacted water will be recycled or properly disposed of by an approved hauler.	Recycling cooking FOG allows the FOG to be used for industrial processes and is often incentivized for FSEs by the hauler.
Wipe solids and FOG off dishes and into trash prior to washing.	Minimizes the amounts of FOG and solids that can enter the wastewater system.	Dramatically decreases the possibility of any blockage caused by the FSE.
Clean floor mats in a utility/mop sink.	This prevents any FOG or solids from entering stormwater drains.	Prevents any stormwater violations by keeping restaurant wastewater separate from storm drains, which lead to bodies of water.
Train all employees on BMP practices.	This keeps all staff, new or old, aware of practices that protect the FSE and the wastewater system.	Keeps staff aware of what they should do with their FOG waste. Staff can correct each other whenever they see malpractice.

## **FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)**

### **What is FOG and why should I care?**

Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) are a byproduct of restaurant activities. FOG are wastes that the city's sewer system cannot handle and should not be discarded down the drain. As it cools, FOG thickens and decreases pipe capacity both inside the food service establishment and in the main sewer system. It clogs sewer lines (the same way bad cholesterol can clog heart arteries), causing sewage back-ups and flooding. Sewage backups can damage personal and public property.

### **Will running hot water prevent FOG from clogging my pipes?**

No. Many people think that hot water will help fats, oils, and grease break down in the drain. That is incorrect. As the grease cools, it will solidify, causing pipes to clog.

### **Can I dispose of FOG by pouring it in the toilet?**

No. The same goes for toilets. If you flush items down the toilet that don't belong there, you are inviting clogs and overflows.

### **What happens if there's a spill?**

Spills should be remedied with an absorbent like paper towels, newspaper, sand, or kitty litter. Once the spill is absorbed, sweep up the material and throw it away.

### **How do I clean floor mats that have had a grease spill?**

Do not wash kitchen mats, grills, or other equipment outside as the soiled water may run into a storm drain and pollute the system. Greasy equipment should be wiped down with a degreaser and/ or cleaned over a utility sink if possible.

### **I had a small spill outside by the grease storage container. The rain will wash it away. Do I still need to clean it up?**

Yes. During the transportation of used grease from indoor to outdoor storage containers spills can happen. No matter how small the spill is it's important that it is cleaned up properly and promptly. If not, the next rain event will wash it into the nearest storm drain and pollute the storm water system.

### **Can I leave my outside grease storage container uncovered?**

No. Uncovered grease and oil storage containers can collect rainwater. Since grease and oil float, the rainwater can cause an overflow onto the ground. Such an overflow will eventually reach the storm water system and nearby streams. Uncovered grease storage containers can also be a source of food for pests.

### **Where should I locate my outside grease storage container?**

Locate outside grease storage containers away from storm drains. The further away from a storm drain, the less likely spills will enter the storm drain system. Schedule regular pickups of grease and oil storage containers. Inspect containers regularly for any damages, leaks, or other deficiencies.



## Housekeeping

- Use good housekeeping to prevent or avoid spills onto floors or other surfaces.
- If a spill occurs, clean it immediately to reduce safety hazards and prevent it from reaching the storm drain.
- Use absorbent materials, and dispose of them properly by putting it in the trash.
- Inspect solid waste dumpsters regularly to ensure they are not leaking. If the dumpster is leaking, call your sanitation service immediately.



## Cleaning

- Regularly clean outside areas (parking lot, dumpster area, etc.) to prevent a buildup of trash, debris, and other pollutants.
- Pickup and sweep trash and debris, then dispose of them properly.
- Sweep outside areas instead of hosing to prevent anything from reaching storm drains.
- Take floor mats to a utility/mop to clean them. Do not dump water, or clean floor mats outside. Pour mop water into the mop sink.



## Grease and Oil

- Have an approved hauler clean and inspect grease devices/interceptors on a regular basis.
- Never dump oil or grease into storm drains, floor drains, outside or onto parking lots. Use a proper grease and oil recycling receptacle.
- To avoid spills while taking used oil to an oil recycling receptacle, use caution and be careful.
- Inspect your used oil recycling receptacle to ensure it is not leaking. If the receptacle is leaking, call your provider immediately.

## Prohibitions relating to the discharge of Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG)

Prohibitions	Reason
Do not discharge fats, oil, or grease (FOG) into the publicly owned treatment works.	FOG can solidify in the wastewater collection system and cause back-ups and/or sanitary sewer overflows.
Do not discharge food scraps, garbage, animal parts, or any other items which may create obstructions in the publicly owned treatment works.	Large items combine with other materials to cause blockages in the publicly owned treatment system.
Do not discharge water in excess of 140° F to any grease traps. Traps are smaller devices located inside the establishment. *Water in excess of 140° F can be discharged into remotely located grease interceptors as the large volume and longer retention time will allow the grease to re-congeal in the device.	Temperatures in excess of 140° F will emulsify grease. This grease will later re-congeal downstream in the publicly owned treatment works as the temperature drops.
Do not discharge solvents, enzymes, emulsifying agents or other chemicals deemed harmful into the publicly owned treatment works.	While emulsifying agents and other chemicals can emulsify solidified grease, they can have other harmful effects on the collection system and operation of the wastewater treatment plants.
Do not use any grease emulsifying agents biological or otherwise without expressed written permission from the City of Charlotte's System Protection.	The chemical agents may have an adverse effect on the operation of the City's wastewater treatment plants.
Do not clean floor mats or any other kitchen equipment outside where the water can flow into a storm drain, gutter, or street.	Grease and debris washed off this equipment can enter the storm drain and subsequently end up in a stream, river, or lake. These items should be washed in a floor sink or mop sink enabling the water to be collected and discharged into the collection system.



KEEP GREASE, WIPES, OILS, DEBRIS & FATS OUT OF YOUR PIPES

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## DON'T

**DO NOT** pour cooking residue directly down the drain.



**DO NOT** dispose of food waste into the garbage disposal.



**DO NOT** pour waste oil down the drain.



**DO NOT** wash floor mats where water will run off directly into the storm drain.



## DO

Wipe pots, pans, and work areas prior to washing.



Dispose of food waste directly into the trash.



Collect waste oil and store for recycling.



Clean mats inside over a utility sink.



CHARLOTTE  
**WATER**

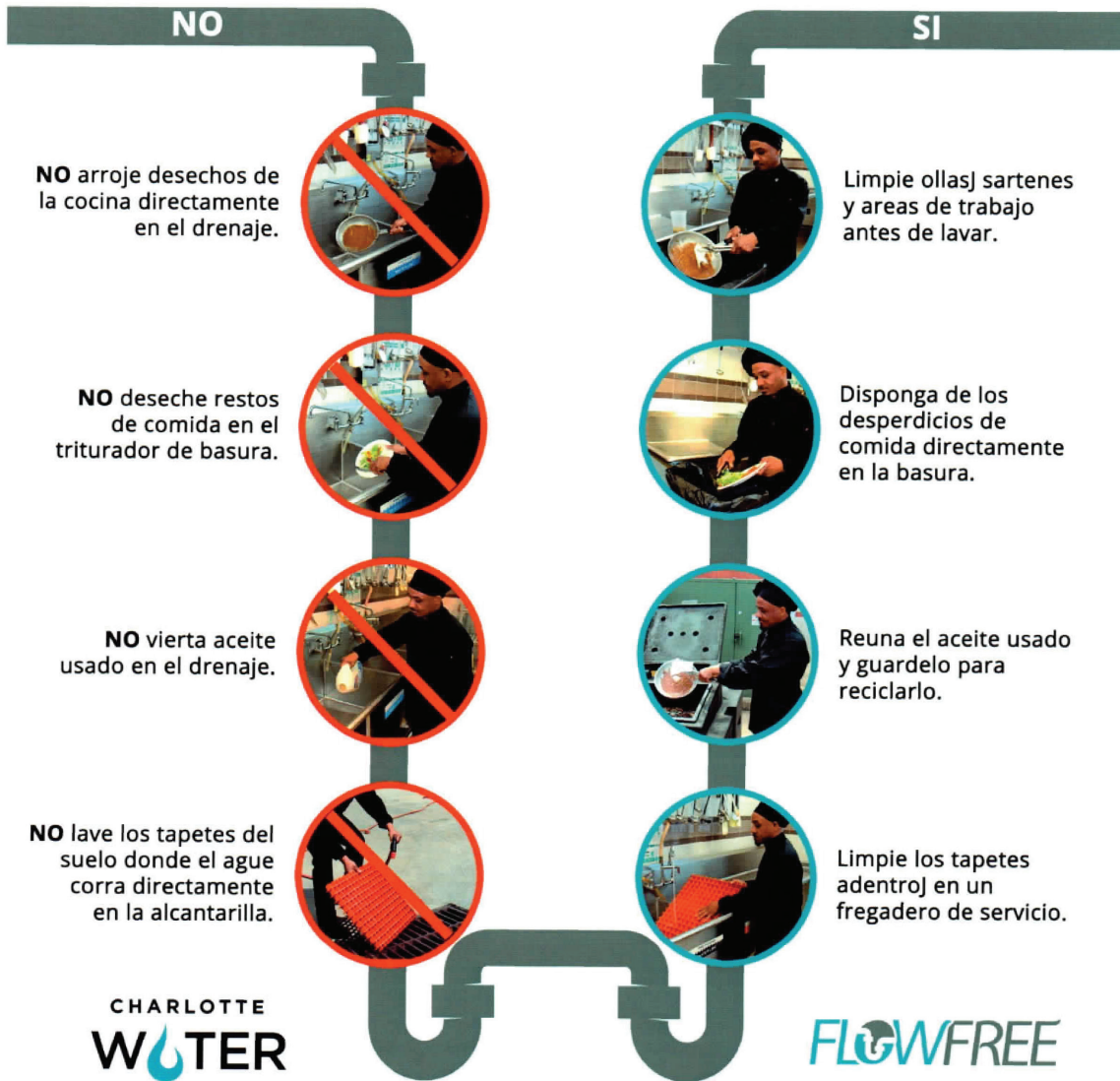
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To view the Best Management Practices video, scan here:



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Para ver el video de las Mejores Prácticas de Gestión, escanee aquí:

