

## **Fats, Oils & Grease (FOG): A Bad Diet for Our City.**

Fats, Oils, and Grease can be unhealthy for your body. But did you know that fats, oils, and grease are bad for your plumbing system, too?

### **What is FOG?**

Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) come from, cooking oil, bacon grease, meat fats, food scraps, shortening, lard, butter and margarine, gravy, and food products such as mayonnaise, salad dressings, and sour cream.

When FOG is poured down kitchen drains it accumulates inside sewer pipes. As the FOG builds up, it restricts the flow in the pipes and can cause untreated wastewater to back up into homes and businesses, resulting in high costs for cleanup and restoration.



FOG discharged into septic systems and drain fields can cause malfunctions, resulting in more frequent tank pump-outs and other expenses.

Restaurants, cafeterias, and fast-food establishments spend tens of thousands of dollars on plumbing emergencies each year to deal with grease blockages and pump out grease traps and interceptors. Some cities charge businesses for the repair of sewer pipes and spill cleanup if they can attribute the blockage to a particular business. Other

cities add a surcharge to wastewater bills if a business exceeds a specified discharge limit. These expenses can be significant.

Manholes can overflow into parks, yards, streets, and storm drains, allowing FOG to contaminate local waters, including drinking water. Exposure to untreated wastewater is a public-health hazard.

Communities spend millions of dollars every year unplugging or replacing grease-blocked pipes, repairing pump stations, and cleaning up costly and illegal wastewater spills. Excessive FOG in the sewer system can affect local



wastewater rates. So, keeping FOG out of the sewer system helps everyone in the community.

City of Irving is participating in a Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) Outreach Initiative in accordance with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. This effort focuses on improved operation and maintenance measures as well as the implementation of an educational outreach program. Our FOG Control Program is established to prevent the discharge of fats, oils and grease into the sanitary sewer system.

### **Save Your Drains and Freeze the Grease !**

Save Your Drains, and Freeze the Grease is part of a public education project to help prevent blockages in sewer pipes that can cause sanitary sewer overflows. The grease by products produced in our kitchens, accumulate and solidify inside the sewer system. This overloads the system, causing sewage to overflow into streets, yards, and storm ditches, eventually reaching storm channels, tributaries, and the Trinity River.

The grease that blocks the sewer pipes generally comes from two sources - commercial and residential kitchens. Commercial establishments, such as restaurants, institutional cafeterias and other public kitchens, are regulated by City ordinance. They are required to install grease traps that must be cleaned periodically. Residents don't have grease traps. The most practical way to reduce grease from residential kitchens is to offer easy ways to prevent grease from entering the sewer pipes in the first place.

**Just a few simple actions can prevent FOG buildup in the sewer system. You and your family may not have to ever use the plunger again! You can also keep your sewer lines free flowing, which will help to protect Irving's natural environment.**

- **DO NOT** pour grease products down sink drains or toilets. Pour liquid oils and grease into disposable waste containers\*. When the container is full of grease let it solidify in the freezer, under you sink, or at plain room temperature. Seal and dispose of in the garbage.
  - \* Disposable used waste containers: Consider using coffee cans, pet food cans, food jars, etc., that you already have in your home. Instead of throwing them away empty, use them to collect your cooking oil or grease. Heat resistant bags, Oven roasting bags (sold in grocery stores) or foil lined bags will also work.
- Scrape fats, grease and food from plates and cooking utensils into the trash.
- Use basket strainers in sinks to catch food particles and empty them into the trash.



If you receive a door hanger like this at your residence, please read the information, of how to prevent grease blockages.

- Remember, garbage disposals are not effective for disposing of FOG. Food scraps actually add to the problem by adhering to the grease in the pipes.



Step 1: Find an empty, standard size aluminum can.  
Step 2: Pour grease into the can/foil bag and seal so it can solidify.  
Step 3: Dispose of the can/foil bag once it is full. Reuse the can lid.



**Use these tools to reduce grease blockages in your area.**

Foil lined grease bags allow you to contain liquid grease and dispose of it properly.

Reusable can lids cover grease that you collect in a can.

Grease scrapers help scrape grease and food off of dishes and cooking pans.



