



Environmental Information Bulletin Helpful Information from the Collier County Wastewater Division

FATS, OIL AND GREASE

What is FOG?

FOG refers to Fats, Oil and Grease found in most kitchens. About 30 percent of the foods we eat contain FOG including meats, sauces, gravies, salad dressings, deep-fried dishes, cookies, pastries, cheeses, butter and others. FOG refers to any solid or viscous substance, including grease, which may obstruct the flow in a wastewater collection system, or otherwise interfere with the normal operation of a wastewater treatment system.

Why is FOG a problem?

FOG is the main cause of most wastewater collection system blockages that often result in spills. These spills present a potential health hazard and clean-up is difficult, time consuming and costly. When sewer lines become blocked, untreated wastewater may back up onto streets, parking lots and into nearby businesses and residences. If the blockage originates on your property, you are likely to be the first affected. Collier County Public Utilities maintains several video cameras capable of tracking problems visually within the sewer system. Sources of FOG problems can be identified this way and enforcement action initiated to ensure compliance with the County's Pretreatment Program and Ordinances.

Why should I care about FOG?

Someone must pay for sewer blockage cleanup; this is reflected in rate increases. FOG blockages in the sewer pipes servicing individual customers can cause toilets and bathtubs to backup and could lead to health hazards in the home. According to Chapter 134, Article IX of the Collier County Code of Ordinances, if grease accumulates in the wastewater collection lines, the owner or operator will be billed for cleaning collection lines and for any other expenses incurred by the County. Wastewater with large amounts of grease shall not be discharged into the wastewater system.

How Do You Properly Dispose of FOG?

It is the responsibility of each customer to properly dispose of FOG left over after cooking.

- 1) Scrape food from plates before washing in the sink or dishwasher.
- 2) Liquid grease and oil should be kept in a tight sealing container until it cools and then disposed of in the trash.
- 3) Large quantities of cooking oil can be recycled at any one of the County recycling locations. Location addresses may be found at <https://www.colliercountyfl.gov/your-government/divisions-s-z/solid-hazardous-waste-management/hazardous-materials-management-program/maw-and-recycling-disposal-locations>.
- 4) Garbage disposals should be used only for small particles left over after scraping in the trash. Even food particles that pass through a garbage disposal can contribute to blockages.
- 5) Running hot water or pouring soap down the drain will not help! As the grease cools in your service or in the county sewer, it becomes a solid again and can cause a blockage.

What is the Collier County Wastewater Division doing to Combat FOG?

The Industrial Pretreatment Section provides education outreach material to customers. This outreach includes flyers like this one, presentations to home owners' associations, public service announcements on Collier TV and the newspaper, and targeted door-to-door educational materials. We also have an outreach and inspection system that provides educational materials and inspections for over 800 food establishments.

Remember, keeping FOG out of the sewer helps to protect the environment and saves you money! Thanks for doing your part!

If you have questions or would like additional information, please call the Collier County Water Reclamation Laboratory – Industrial Pretreatment Section at (239) 252-6886.
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