



# YOUR GUIDE TO FOG BEST PRACTICES



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY  
PUBLIC UTILITIES**

*Preventing SSO's*

# IMPORTANCE ON BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Overall, implementing FOG best management practices is essential for safeguarding public health, preserving the environment, maintaining infrastructure integrity, and ensuring regulatory compliance. By following BMPs, individuals and communities can mitigate the negative impacts of FOG pollution and contribute to sustainable wastewater management.

*“Charlotte County Utilities: Safeguarding Communities and Delivering Value. Our Commitment to Safe Wastewater Services for Every Home and Business.”*

The purpose of this practice guide is to minimize Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs), 43% of sewer blockages are FOG related blockages.

## What are the sources of Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG), and why does it pose a concern?

Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) originate from various sources such as cooking and food preparation. The concern arises due to the potential for FOG to accumulate in pipes and sewer systems, leading to blockages and environmental hazards. Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) pose a concern to the public due to their tendency to accumulate in sewer systems. When FOG is improperly disposed of, it can lead to clogs and backups, causing potential health hazards, property damage, and increased maintenance costs for the community. Understanding the sources and addressing proper disposal is crucial for preventing these issues.

### Sources of FOG



**Fats-** Fatty meats, poultry skins, heavy cream, butter, soft cheeses, bacon and ice cream. *(solid at room temp)*



**Oils-** Vegetable oils, margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressing, peanut butter, avocado and mixed nuts. *(Liquid at room temp)*



**Grease-** Grease comes from animal fats or vegetable oils and will harden once cooled. *(Liquid when heated, solid when cooled)*



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*Grease Smart, Keep It Apart!*

3100 Loveland Blvd Punta Gorda, FL 33980  
Learn More at [charlottecountyfl.gov/FOG](http://charlottecountyfl.gov/FOG)  
or email [ccupretreatment@charlottecountyfl.gov](mailto:ccupretreatment@charlottecountyfl.gov)

# WHO'S INCLUDED IN THE FOG PROGRAM?

Entities required to follow regulations under the Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) program typically include establishments such as restaurants, cafés, take-outs, lunch counters, cafeterias, bars, clubs, hotels, hospitals, factories, schools, and other facilities involved in food preparation or service where F.O.G. may enter the sewer system. Compliance with FOG regulations may involve the installation and maintenance of grease interceptors or traps. You can View [Grease Interceptor Samples](#) to find additional information on tank requirements.

## All monitored establishments must:

- Complete a facility survey.
- Adhere to the current Florida Building Code and Charlotte County Utility Design Standards.
- Clean and maintain grease trap every 30 days.
- Clean and maintain grease interceptor every 90 days.
- Keep records of date(s), action taken, volume hauled and inspection date(s) (cleaning & maintenance).
- Execute needed repairs.
- Use a licensed/permitted hauler to dispose of grease and solids.
- Allow county FOG inspectors access during business hours.
- Retain maintenance and hauling records no less than three (3) years.
- Acquire approval to use any chemicals or additives.
- Acquire approval to use alternative grease removal technologies.

## Recordkeeping:

Written documentation of maintenance activities for all grease removal devices must be consistently kept. These records must be preserved for a duration of three years and should be accessible for inspection by county officials when required. The documentation should encompass the following details:

- Time and date of maintenance or cleaning.
- Name of company or individual that performed the maintenance.
- Specifics of any repairs.
- Dates of completed repairs.
- Name of approved/permitted hauler.
- Volume collected and date hauled.
- Additional notes on additives used.
- Copies of authorized haulers' receipts or [service manifests](#).
- Copy of required building survey(s).

## What to expect during a FOG inspection?

### Grease Interceptor/Trap Inspection:

- Verification of the presence and proper installation of grease interceptors or traps.
- Examination of the condition and capacity of the interceptor or trap (samples will be collected if needed).

### Maintenance Records:

- Inspection of written records documenting maintenance activities for grease removal devices.
- Ensuring that maintenance records are properly retained for the required period.

### Compliance with Regulations:

- Verification of compliance with local regulations regarding FOG management.
- Evaluation of adherence to proper disposal practices and the use of approved grease removal devices.

### Staff Training:

- Assessing whether staff is adequately trained on FOG management and best practices.

### Kitchen Practices:

- Observing kitchen practices to prevent FOG from entering drains and sewer systems.
- Checking for the proper use of disposable containers in establishments where it is applicable.

### Waste Disposal Procedures:

- Examination of procedures for the disposal of cooking oil and other FOG-containing waste.

### Education and Awareness:

- Ensuring that the establishment is aware of the importance of FOG management and its impact on sewer systems (education materials will be provided).

### Follow-Up Recommendations:

- Providing recommendations for improvement if any deficiencies are identified.



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Best Practices for a FOG-Free  
Tomorrow!

Code of Ordinances  
[charlottecountyfl.gov/FOG](http://charlottecountyfl.gov/FOG)  
[indianriver.floridahealth.gov](http://indianriver.floridahealth.gov)

Email: [ccupretreatment@charlottecountyfl.gov](mailto:ccupretreatment@charlottecountyfl.gov)

# DO I NEED A GREASE INTERCEPTOR OR TRAP?

Grease interceptors are mandatory for establishments like restaurants, cafés, take-outs, bars, and kitchens in hotels, hospitals, factories, and schools. If your operation involves food preparation where Fats, Oils, and Grease (F.O.G.) might enter the sewer system, having an F.O.G. interceptor is a requirement. Take-out or non-cooking food establishments that use disposable containers may use alternative interceptors, subject to director approval, as long as their discharges comply with regulations.

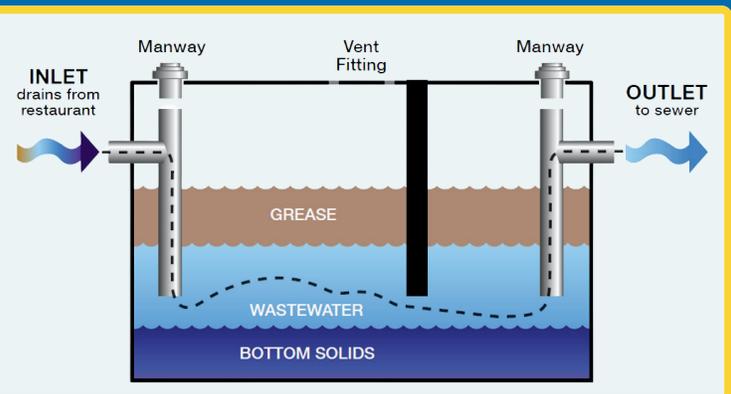


## What is a grease trap, and how does it work?

A [grease trap](#), also known as a grease interceptor, is a plumbing device designed to capture and separate fats, oils, and grease (FOG) from wastewater before it enters the sewer system. Grease traps play a crucial role in preventing FOG from entering sewer lines, where it could lead to blockages and other issues. The grease trap's rated flow is less than fifty (50) GPM, and is located inside a Regulated Establishment. Grease Traps must comply with the applicable [requirements](#) of the Florida Plumbing Code and installed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Regulated Establishments must request approval to install a Grease Trap instead of a Grease Interceptor.

## Grease trap under the sink

- 1. Entry of Wastewater:** Wastewater containing FOG from sinks, dishwashers, and other kitchen fixtures enters the grease trap.
- 2. Separation Chamber:** The grease trap consists of a chamber where the wastewater flow slows down. This allows the FOG to rise to the surface due to its lighter density.
- 3. Gravity Separation:** As the FOG rises, it forms a layer on the top of the water inside the trap, separating from the relatively cleaner water.
- 4. Retained Grease:** The grease trap retains the separated FOG within the trap, preventing it from entering the sewer lines.
- 5. Treated Effluent:** The treated wastewater, with reduced amounts of FOG, continues its flow through an outlet to the sewer system.
- 6. Regular Maintenance:** To ensure optimal functionality, the accumulated grease in the trap needs to be periodically removed through pumping or manual cleaning.



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**Before failed inspection**

**After inspection & pumping**

**Inlet**



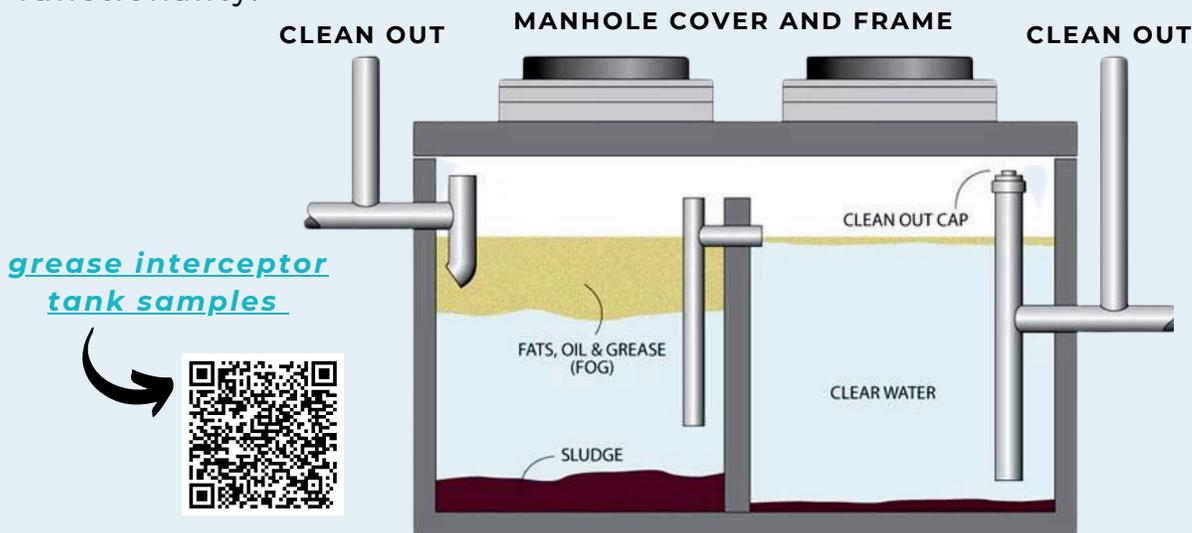
**Outlet**



## What is a grease interceptor and how does it work?

A grease interceptor (grease trap) is a plumbing device designed to intercept and trap fats, oils, and grease (FOG) from wastewater before it enters the sewer system. Here's how it typically works:

- 1. Interception:** The wastewater containing FOG flows into the grease interceptor from sinks, dishwashers, and other kitchen fixtures.
- 2. Separation:** Inside the grease interceptor, the flow of wastewater slows down. This allows the FOG to naturally rise to the surface due to its lighter density, forming a layer on top of the water.
- 3. Retention:** The grease interceptor holds the FOG on the surface while allowing the relatively cleaner water to continue its flow through the system.
- 4. Effluent Discharge:** The treated water, with reduced amounts of FOG, exits the grease interceptor and continues its journey into the sewer system.
- 5. Maintenance:** Periodically, the accumulated grease in the interceptor needs to be manually removed through pumping or other means to ensure proper functionality.



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# BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Adopted Best Management Practices (BMPs): Every Regulated Establishment is obligated to apply BMPs aimed at reducing the release of fats, oils, and grease into Charlotte County's sanitary sewer system.

## Common BMPs for mandatory establishments?

### **Drain Screens:**

- Install drain screens on all drainage pipes in the food preparation areas.

### **Waste Cooking Oils:**

- Collect and store waste cooking oils properly in recycling receptacles (e.g., barrels or drums). Maintain recycling receptacles to prevent leakage.
- Transport waste cooking oils using a waste cooking oil hauler and dispose of them at a waste cooking oil recycling or disposal facility.

### **Food Waste Disposal:**

- Dispose of all food waste directly in the trash or garbage (not in sinks, garbage disposals, or grinders).
- Ensure proper disposal to prevent leakage in the trash container.
- If a grinder is used, install a solids interceptor between the grinder and the Grease Interceptor.

### **Employee Training:**

- Provide periodic training for employees on specific subjects.
- Dry-wiping pots, pans, dishware, and work areas before washing to remove grease.
- Ensure food waste and solids are securely sealed in plastic bags before placing them in trash containers to prevent leaks and odors.
- Location and use of absorption products to clean under fryer baskets and other areas where grease may be spilled or dripped.
- Proper disposal of grease and oils from cooking equipment to a proper grease receptacle without spilling.
- Document and verify training with employee signatures.
- Maintain training records for at least two (2) years and make them available for inspection upon request by the Utility.

### **Conspicuous Posting:**

- Post BMPs and waste minimization practices conspicuously in the food preparation and dishwashing areas.

## What to do with yellow grease?

Yellow grease can be recycled into biodiesel, a sustainable alternative to traditional diesel fuel. Many recycling facilities accept yellow grease for this purpose.

Rendering companies specialize in collecting and processing used cooking oils, including yellow grease, to convert them into various products, such as animal feed and biofuels. Check with local recycling programs or waste management facilities to see if they accept yellow grease.



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## What is a complete pumping service?

Pumping services shall include the initial complete removal of all contents including floating materials, Wastewater, bottom sludge, and solids from the interceptor. Grease Interceptor cleaning shall include scraping excessive solids from the walls, floors, baffles, and all pipe work. The return of Gray Water back into the Grease Interceptor is prohibited. Each Regulated Establishment must inspect its Grease Interceptor during pumping to verify thorough cleaning and ensure all internal fittings and fixtures are in proper working condition.

## What information is required to be included on the receipt/manifest from the hauler?

- Waste disposal company.
- Name of regulated establishment.
- Gallons pumped.
- Disposal site.
- Disposal driver initials.
- CCU inspector initials and date.

## Who submits quarterly reports?

Regulated Establishments are required to submit Quarterly Reports to the County using the provided format. The submission deadline for Quarterly Reports is on or before the 15th day of January, April, July, and October annually. (Refer to ordinance)

*Submission of reports is mandatory within the specified timeframe, and any received after the 15th day of the designated month will incur a late fee.*

### **Each report shall record the following:**

1. Cleaning Frequency:
  - Record the number of times the Grease Trap(s) and/or Grease Interceptor(s) has been cleaned since the last report.
2. Cleaning Details:
  - Specify the name(s) of the individual or company that performed the cleanings.
3. Repairs Information:
  - Document any repairs made to the trap(s) and/or Grease Interceptor(s).
  - Include the dates on which the repairs were performed.



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[Find more information on grease waste requirements.](#)



**Who do I contact for a FOG management education session/workshop?**

Email: [brianna.pifer-joseph@charlottecountyfl.gov](mailto:brianna.pifer-joseph@charlottecountyfl.gov) for our FOG program coordinator.

**Who do I contact for FOG program related questions?**

Email: [ccupretreatment@charlottecountyfl.gov](mailto:ccupretreatment@charlottecountyfl.gov).

**Who do I contact in case of a FOG-related spill or sewer emergency?**

Call 941.764.4300 (there is no charge for our 24/7 response service)

**How do I obtain a plumbing permit?**

Call: 941.743.1201 or Email: [BuildingConstruction@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:BuildingConstruction@CharlotteCountyFL.gov)

## How to remain in Compliance:

- Completed facility survey.
- Obtain correct permits for any replacement or repairs on the premises.
- Install an approved grease trap or interceptor by Charlotte County utilities.
- Operate and maintain grease trap or interceptor.
- Make sure all plumbing associated with grease removal devices are in compliance.
- Use and practice this FOG management practice guide.
- Follow regular pump out schedules.
- Keep correct written maintenance records no less than 3 years (do not falsify records).
- Restrain from tampering of the grease removal devices.
- Acquire approval from Charlotte County Utilities on the use of any additives.
- Only use approved/permitted grease haulers.
- Allow access to the grease trap/interceptor for observance.
- Allow sampling, metering or monitoring devices for county FOG inspectors.



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**Your Guide to FOG Best Practices – Let's  
Keep Our Water Flowing Clean and Green**

*Delivering  
Exceptional  
Service*

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[FOG Program Website](#)



[Floridahealth.gov](http://Floridahealth.gov)

