

Fats, Oils, and Grease: What You Should Know



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Many households dispose of fats, oils, and grease (FOG) from the kitchen by pouring the wastes down the drain. Unfortunately, FOG causes significant health hazards for homeowners and wastewater treatment plants.

Pipe clogging

Even if liquid when disposed of down the drain, FOG can quickly solidify in drainpipes, bind to drainpipe walls, and accumulate more FOG. The accumulation can clog the drainpipes in your home and in larger city sewer pipes.



Impaired wastewater treatment

FOG that does not deposit within drainpipes and sewers ultimately winds up at a wastewater treatment plant. FOG can bind together and carry other biological wastes that, if not removed manually and disinfected, could be deposited to surface waters in the event of an accidental release.

Since FOGs are hydrophobic compounds that are lighter than water and resist binding to it, they can form clumps that carry other particles that must be removed manually from wastewater treatment systems.

Increased nutrient loading and eutrophication of surface water

Surface water quality contained in rivers and streams can be impaired due to reduced oxygen levels needed to sustain macroinvertebrate and other aquatic life.

The decomposition of FOG by bacteria and other organisms utilizes dissolved oxygen contained in surface water. Adding more "food," FOG can cause rapid growth in bacteria populations that can deplete dissolved oxygen levels in surface waters more quickly than they can be replenished naturally. If enough oxygen is removed from surface water, fish and other aquatic life may die.

What can you do about it?

- Dispose of FOG by solidifying it and throwing it in the trash or finding a reuse purpose for it.



- If you are business that utilizes a grease trap, make sure that it is cleaned out regularly.