

FOG: Fats, Oils & Grease

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is FOG?

A. FOG stands for fats, oils and grease.

Q. Why is Baltimore City implementing a FOG Program?

A. The FOG Program is one of many operational requirements set forth by a Consent Decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Maryland Department of the Environment to improve water quality and eliminate sanitary sewer overflows through improvements to the sewer system citywide. The Program is designed to minimize the amount of FOG discharged to the sewer system.

Q. What are the requirements of the FOG Program?

A. All food service establishments that discharge, or have the potential to discharge FOG-laden wastewater are required to:

- 💧 Have a valid wastewater discharge permit;
- 💧 Have a properly sized, installed, and functioning grease control device;
- 💧 Clean and maintain the grease control device frequently enough to comply with the 25% Rule;
- 💧 Keep a grease control device maintenance log up-to-date and on-site;
- 💧 Properly collect and dispose of FOG.

Q. What are common food sources of FOG?

A. Meat fats, food scraps, cooking oil, baked goods, gravies, dairy products, dressings, sauces, lard, butter and margarine.

Q. What types of facilities are impacted by the FOG Program?

A. All food service establishments that discharge, or have the potential to discharge, FOG-laden wastewater are required to comply with the requirements of the FOG Program. Examples include restaurants, carry outs, delis, convenience stores, caterers, hospital and school cafeterias, nursing homes and assisted living facilities, coffee shops and ice cream parlors.

For more information, call 410-396-9695, email us at pollutioncontrolsection@baltimorecity.gov, or visit us online at cleanwaterbaltimore.org

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Q. How does FOG get into the sewer system?

A. FOG is generated in most kitchens and discharged to the sewer system during food preparation and cleaning operations. Major sources of discharges include pot wash sinks, dishwasher pre-rinse stations, mop sinks, soup kettle floor drains, wok range stations and automatic ventilation hood washers.

Q. How often do I need to clean the grease control device?

A. The device should be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations and frequently enough to be in continual compliance with the 25% Rule. The frequency will vary based on implementation of kitchen best management practices, seating capacity, type of food served, number of fixtures discharging to it and the capacity of the device.

Q. Is it acceptable to use additives, enzymes or bacteria in the grease control device?

A. No. The use of these products is prohibited by the Baltimore City Plumbing Code.

Q. What is the proper method to dispose of FOG?

A. Waste grease from deep fryers can be recycled and should be stored in a covered container until a licensed hauler can take it off site. Grease collected from grease control device maintenance activities should be collected in a covered container and disposed of in the garbage or by a licensed hauler. **FOG should never be discharged to sinks, drains or storm drains.**

Q. What kitchen fixtures are required to be connected to a grease control device?

A. The Baltimore City Plumbing Code requires that all fixtures and equipment located in food preparation areas that discharge FOG-laden wastewater be connected to a grease control device. Examples of such fixtures and equipment

include: pot sinks, pre-rinse sinks, soup kettles, wok stations, floor drains and automatic hood wash units. Contact your plumber or the City of Baltimore Department of Housing and Community Development if uncertain about plumbing code requirements.

Q. What is the 25% Rule?

A. The 25% Rule is an industry accepted guideline for establishing cleaning frequency and minimizing the amount of FOG discharged to the sewer. The amount of floatable grease and settled solids should not exceed 25% of the hydraulic depth, as measured from the static water level to the interior tank bottom. This means that a grease control device requires cleaning before the combined depth of settled solids and surface grease totals 25% of the total depth of the interceptor contents.

