



SRU FAT, OIL, GREASE AND WAX (FOG) CONTROL PROGRAM

Frequently Asked FOG Questions

Q: What is FOG?

A: FOG stands for Fat, Oil, Grease and Wax that are discharged to the sanitary sewer – most often from food preparation activities.

Q: What are the impacts of FOG?

A: FOG can clog sanitary sewer lines and cause overflows that can affect public health and the environment and increase operating costs. The majority of sanitary sewer backups occur in private drain lines between homes or businesses and the City's sanitary sewer system. The property owner is responsible for these private lines. Improper management of FOG by sewer users, primarily restaurants and other food service establishments, has become a significant problem for wastewater collection and treatment systems. FOG can coat, congeal in, and accumulate in pipes, pumps, and equipment. By 2008, according to the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ), about 500 sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) per year in NC were attributed to the effects of FOG. When SSOs occur, raw sewage spills onto the ground and sometimes reaches waterways. As a result of the increasing number of SSOs caused by FOG, the Environmental Protection Agency and the DWQ have developed new requirements for municipalities that operate collection systems.

Q: Why was the FOG Control Program created?

A: Salisbury's FOG Control Program is a state and federal mandate and is required by the Wastewater Collection System Permit Number WQCS 00019 issued to the City of Salisbury by the State. The FOG Control Program will help protect sewers against harmful accumulations of FOG. The FOG Control Program is discussed in a document (available from SRU) called the FAT, OIL, GREASE AND WAX (FOG) CONTROL PROGRAM USER GUIDANCE DOCUMENT AND SRU IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.

Q: What are the Elements of the FOG Control Program?

A: The Program includes, among others, the following elements:

- City ordinances
- City of Salisbury Uniform Construction Standards for grease interceptors and grease traps
- The SRU Implementation Plan that outlines the SRU plan for complying with its collection system permit and for satisfying the duties assigned by City ordinance and exercising its authority delegated by City ordinance

The Program requires all food service establishments (and other sewer users that discharge excessive FOG) to operate and maintain an SRU-approved grease interceptor or trap at their own expense. Grease interceptors and traps are designed to capture FOG, solids, and other debris before they enter a sewer, where they become a problem by clogging sewers and disrupting water flow. The grease interceptors/traps capture those wastes and contain them until a septage management firm can properly dispose of them.

Q: What are the major requirements of the FOG Control Program?

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- Minimum pumping of grease interceptors and traps
- Record keeping: All food service establishments must keep pumping records for at least three years.

Q. "Do I have a grease interceptor or trap?"

A. If you are not sure, please contact a local plumber for assistance.

Q. "Do I need a grease interceptor or trap?"

A. Grease interceptors or traps are required for all food service establishments (not just restaurants) and all sewer users that discharge excessive FOG.

Q. "What is a 'Food Service Establishment'?"

A. The FOG Program defines a food service establishment as a commercial, industrial, or institutional facility primarily engaged in activities of preparing, serving, or otherwise making food items available for consumption, including but not limited to restaurants, commercial kitchens, caterers, hotels, cafeterias, delicatessans, meat-cutting facilities, bakeries, ice cream parlors, cafes, hospitals, daycares, schools, bars, correctional facilities, and care institutions.

Q. "What is the difference between grease interceptors and traps?"

A. Both grease interceptors and traps are designed to remove FOG from the wastewater before it enters the City's sanitary sewer collection system. The main difference between the two is their size. An interceptor is normally 500 gallons or larger and typically located outside. A grease trap is normally 100 gallons or smaller and can be located either outside or indoors.

Q. "How often should I service my grease interceptor or trap?"

A. At a minimum, SRU requires that all grease interceptors be pumped and cleaned out every ninety (90) days and grease traps once every thirty (30) days. However, more frequent maintenance may be required based on site-specific conditions.

Q. "What size grease interceptor should I have?"

A. SRU requires that grease interceptors provide a minimum of 24 minutes hydraulic detention time between the influent and effluent baffles with 25 percent of the total volume of the grease interceptor being allowed for sludge storage. Details are found in the City's Uniform Construction Standards Manual.

Q. "What kinds of problems do oil and grease cause?"

A. Oil and grease build up in sewer lines reduces the system's capacity and can cause a blockage. Blockages may result in sewer backups and overflows, increased maintenance costs, and equipment downtime and possible property damage.

Q. "Isn't my business grand-fathered in under the old rules?"

A. A food service establishment in operation on April 7, 2009 has until April 7, 2012, to install a grease interceptor or trap, unless an earlier date is necessary to remedy interference with the operation or maintenance of a sewer.

Q. "Will a garbage disposal affect a grease interceptor?"

A. Absolutely. The ground-up solids that go through the disposal will settle to the bottom of the grease interceptor and reduce its efficiency. The increased loading will also lead to increased maintenance frequency and cost.

Q. "My restaurant doesn't have space to install an exterior in-ground grease interceptor. Are there other options?"

A. Although grease interceptors are preferred based on ease of operation, maintenance, and reliability, this Program also allows for the use of grease traps where appropriate.

Q. "How do I have an interceptor or trap installed?"

A. Most NC licensed plumbers and plumbing contractors install grease interceptors and traps. All grease interceptors and traps must be approved by the City prior to installation.

Q. "If I own an apartment complex, will I be required to install a grease interceptor?"

A. Maybe. If there is an excessive discharge of FOG, an interceptor or trap will be required. In addition, other measures may be required to address FOG problems, such as distribution to residents of educational materials.

Q. "Who do I contact for questions and information regarding this Program and other FOG issues?"

A. Please contact Salisbury-Rowan Utilities, Environmental Services Division at (704) 638-5375.