

Frequently Asked Questions

What are BMPs, and why do I need to implement them?

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are guidelines, operational procedures, and general knowledge needed to reduce fats, oils, grease and related material from entering the sewer system.

The City has prepared this BMP guide for food service establishments to reduce the amount of fats, oil and grease discharged in the City's collection system. These BMPs are in keeping with the requirements outlined in the City's Sanitary Sewer Management Plan and the State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2006-003. BMPs provide narrative local limits for control of fats, oil and grease in the City's service area.

Can I get a waiver for a grease interceptor for my business?

In accordance with the City's Sewer Use Ordinance (33.03.165 Grease Interceptors), limited types of food service establishments may apply for a waiver from installation of grease interceptors. An application is required and is not guaranteed to be approved.

Why should I be concerned about fats, oils and grease at my business?

When fats, oil and grease enter the sewer system, they can build-up and coat the inside of pipes and pumping stations. This build-up can cause clogs in the sewer pipes and may cause back-ups into your sinks and drains in the building. This can be costly to remedy and typically requires hiring a licensed plumber. If clogs occur in the sewer collection system, the backed-up sewer waste can end up entering our stormwater drains which discharge to our local creeks and streams untreated.

If a back-up or overflow occurs due to your business not implementing best management practices and allowing fats, oils and grease to enter the sewer system, the City will implement civil penalties as well as cost recovery for any time, equipment and reporting related to the event.

How often must I check/clean my grease trap or interceptor?

Grease traps and interceptors must never be more than 25% full of congealed grease, oil, sludge or solid food material. You are responsible for all costs related to the maintenance and operation of your grease trap or interceptor.

Under-counter grease traps should be checked weekly to establish the cleaning frequency needed for your cooking type and customer load. An inspection log should be kept. Your grease trap may need to be cleaned more than once per week. All cleaning and maintenance should be documented in a bound logbook.

In-ground grease interceptor should be checked monthly to determine the cleaning frequency needed.

City staff can assist you in determining the frequency needed. Keep an inspection log and ensure that all grease interceptors are pumped-out and cleaned by a permitted grease hauler. All cleaning and maintenance should be documented and retained for City inspection.

Can I apply for a waiver for my grease trap or interceptor cleaning frequency?

No, the City does not have a waiver for grease trap or interceptor cleaning. The City allows individual food service establishments to set their cleaning scheduled based on their individual use, cooking type and customer loading, but **grease traps and interceptors can never be more than 25% full of grease, oil, sludge or food material in any stage.** If requested, City staff will provide written guidelines on how to self-clean an under-counter trap. Having your staff properly clean the grease trap would save you the cost of an outside contractor.

Frequently Asked Questions

How often will my facility be inspected?

Your facility will be inspected one or two times per year, or as often as necessary to ensure proper maintenance procedures are being followed for all grease pretreatment systems, kitchen exhaust fan grease collection tray(s), mat cleaning processes, trash enclosures and kitchen BMP practices. Structural integrity of the various devices will also be verified. You may or may not be informed ahead of time of when an inspection is scheduled. Failure to allow duly authorized inspectors access to the premises at reasonable times to conduct an inspection is a violation of the City's Sewer Use Ordinance (Municipal Code 33.03.430 through 33.03.450).

What will the inspector look for and do?

The inspector will look at all equipment and food processing and storage areas, paying special attention to the processes that produce wastewater that is discharged from the facility through the grease removal device. The inspector will also open and inspect the grease trap or interceptor and may request to see all records pertaining to the maintenance and repair of the device. The inspector may look at the kitchen exhaust fan on the roof. If applicable, the inspector will examine the external waste enclosure and/or any solid waste handling areas. The inspector will ask questions to ascertain whether procedures outlined in this document have been implemented. Any deficiencies will be noted by the inspector and you will receive a copy of the inspection report and a re-inspection date. If you have not corrected the deficiencies at the time of the re-inspection, you may be billed for the cost of the re-inspection and all future re-inspections.

What records do I need to keep?

You are required to keep the following records for three years:

- Inspection log for grease traps/interceptors and kitchen exhaust hoods
- Records of cleaning and maintenance of grease traps/interceptors and kitchen exhaust hoods
- Training log for new and existing employees, minimum annual training and more frequently if BMPs are not followed.

Why do I need to train or re-train my staff?

Trained staff are more likely to implement BMPs and work to reduce grease discharges to the sewer. People are more willing to support an effort such as keeping fats, oils and grease out of the drain if they understand its basis.

Why do I need to post signs in my kitchen?

Yes. Signs serve as a constant reminder for staff working in kitchens. Signs like "No Grease" or City of Davis developed posters above sinks and on dishwashers can remind staff to minimize grease discharge to the sewer or grease removal device.

How much will an inspection cost my business?

At this time, the City does not charge for inspection services as long as BMPs are followed and any noted deficiencies are corrected per the agreed-upon schedule.

How long do I have to make corrections?

City staff will allow sufficient time to complete corrections. Time allowed will depend on the severity of the deficiency, past deficiencies of the same type and historical compliance in general.

How do I get help?

Call the Public Works Utilities and Operations front counter at 530-757-5686, and staff will direct your call.