Defend Your Drains From Fats

The Effects of Improper Fat, Oil, and Grease (FOG) Disposal

**Fact 1:** Fats, oils, and grease (FOG) are often disposed of improperly. FOG comes from meats, butter, lard, food scraps, sauces, dressings, dairy products, and cooking oil. Some methods of improper disposal may be obvious bad choices, such as dumping used cooking oil down the storm drain. However, even washing greasy residues down the kitchen drain can create problems.

**Fact 2:** Improper disposal of FOG can lead to property damage, health hazards, and environmental problems. Pipes may be blocked by FOG poured or washed down the drain, even if diluted with hot, soapy water (although in a liquid state when hot, grease transforms back to a solid as it cools.) FOG builds up in the wastewater system catching on items such as wipes, leading to "fatbergs" that create blockages. One famous example is the 15-ton London fatberg, which damaged the sewer and took six weeks to repair.

**Fact 3:** As sewer pipes back up, sewage and food particles that accumulate can attract insects and other vermin. It may even create a potential health hazard by exposing people to raw sewage.

**Fact 4:** Property damage can result from sewage backups, resulting in expensive cleanup and plumbing repairs. Clogged sewers can also lead to overflows, which can run into the street and down the storm drain system - eventually polluting our creeks, rivers, and lakes - the source of our drinking water.

**Fact 5:** Oils pollute streams and creeks by forming a film on the water surface, which prevents oxygenation for aquatic life. Polluted stormwater runoff can lead to excessive and costly maintenance and cleanup. It can also result in severe fines from state and federal regulatory agencies. A firm in Tacoma, Washington, was fined $49,000 by authorities for dumping 4,000 gallons of kitchen grease and wastewater down a storm drain.

**Fact 6:** Disposing of restaurant grease into storm drains or down manhole covers is illegal under the Texas Litter Abatement Act (our storm drains lead directly to waterways, not a wastewater treatment plant.) Commercial food preparation establishments and residents should never dispose of grease and cooking oil by dumping it into the storm drain system. For more information on the proper disposal of restaurant grease, visit http://www.ceasethegreasentx.com/Restaurants.html.
Fact 7: When people wash FOG down the drain, they're washing away a valuable commodity. Used vegetable oil can be recycled into a non-toxic, renewable, biodegradable fuel called biodiesel. Used fats and oils can also be recycled into animal feed and other products. Check with your city to see if and how FOG is recycled in your community.

What You Can Do

- Recycle your cooking oil and grease at the of the locations listed on [this map](#) (towards the bottom of the linked webpage).
  - View the Cease the Grease video demonstrating how to easily transfer cooled cooking oil for recycling:
    - Click here to view the video in English
    - Click here to view the video in English with Spanish subtitles

- Reuse your cooking oil. After your used oil has cooled, filter and freeze it.

- Small amounts of oil or grease, such as meat drippings, can be soaked up with a paper towel and thrown into the trash.

- If you can't recycle your used cooking oil, pour it into a sturdy closed-lid container, like a coffee can, and dispose of it in the trash. Another option is to slowly mix in kitty litter until all the oil is absorbed, then place the container in a garbage bag.

To learn more about how to properly dispose of FOG, visit:

- The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) FOG webpage
- The Wastewater And Treatment Education Roundtable (WATER) Cease the Grease website
- The Wastewater And Treatment Education Roundtable (WATER) Defend Your Drains North Texas website