

# Grease Interceptors

## Tips for Controlling Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG)

### **Fats, oils and grease (FOG) are a serious problem**

Pipes clogged with fats, oils and grease (FOG) from food/beverage preparation and clean up are a major cause of sewer overflows. Building sewer backups and public sanitary sewer overflows have a detrimental impact on public health, water quality and business.

### **Food service establishments (FSE) can control FOG**

Food service establishments (FSE) can control 90% of the FOG from food preparation, dishwashing and cleaning by connecting all food/beverage service area fixtures and drains to a properly sized and maintained grease interceptor. This will keep long-term operating costs lower, prevent unexpected service costs and support compliance with the local sewer use ordinance (see "R&O 09-1" under "Rules and Regulations" at [cleanwaterservices.org/fog](http://cleanwaterservices.org/fog)).

### **Oregon Plumbing Specialty Code (OPSC) amendment**

As of January 1, 2013, FSEs in Oregon must connect all drains and fixtures in food/beverage service areas to an approved grease interceptor. This applies to all new construction and remodeling that requires a permit. However, the local sewer authority may require any FSE that discharges FOG in non-compliant levels to install an effective FOG abatement system.

### **Hydromechanical grease interceptors (HGI) vs. gravity grease interceptors (GGI)**

Hydromechanical grease interceptors (HGI) are typically inside and should not be installed underneath the sink or counter where access for maintenance is difficult. Gravity grease interceptors (GGI) are installed outdoors. Care should be taken to ensure that there are no obstructions around the manhole covers that would prevent access for maintenance. A water source should be nearby for proper maintenance. HGIs have smaller FOG storage capacity than GGIs, so they require more frequent cleaning.

### **Which size?**

Oregon code sets a minimum size requirement for grease interceptors, but a better business decision is to size according to anticipated FOG impact and/or preferred long-term maintenance costs. FOG loads vary depending upon the type of food prepared, number of meals served, kitchen staff practices, whether or not a dishwasher is connected, and types of chemicals used for clean-up. To compare approximate maintenance costs, maintenance frequency and grease interceptor options, try using a FOG calculator typically found on the web.

### **Capital Costs (short-term) -vs- Maintenance Costs (long-term)**

greater FOG storage capacity = less frequent maintenance = lower maintenance costs

### **When to clean?**

The cleaning frequency should be set just before the FOG effluent exceeds an acceptable level being discharged to the public sewer system. Any internal components that come into contact with FOG must be visibly cleaned.

### **Waiting costs money**

Inspections find that many FSEs are not controlling FOG effectively, and so they risk unpleasant and costly building sewer backups and have the potential to cause a public sanitary sewer overflow. This may lead to unnecessary penalties and public clean-up costs.