



# CITY OF LAKEPORT MUNICIPAL SEWER DISTRICT

*Over 100 years of community, pride, progress, and service.*

## FATS, OILS AND GREASE (FOG) PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

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### Is grease a problem?

In the sewage collection and treatment business, the answer is an emphatic "YES!" Grease is singled out for special attention because of its poor solubility in water and its tendency to separate from the liquid solution.

Large amounts of oil and grease in the wastewater cause trouble in collection system pipes. It decreases pipe capacity and, therefore, requires frequent cleaning and results in a shorter lifespan. Oil and grease also hamper effective treatment at the wastewater treatment plant.

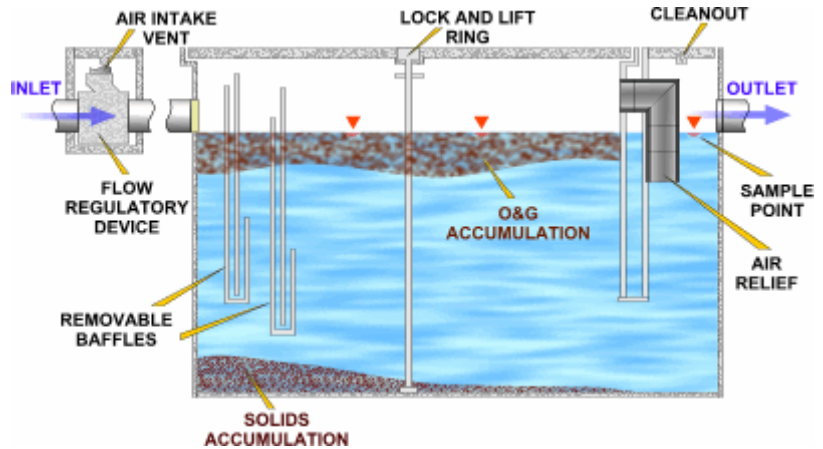
Problems caused by wastes from restaurants and other grease producing establishments have served as the basis for the City's new sewer ordinance, which governs the discharge of materials into the sewer system. It is also why the installation of grease traps or interceptors has become mandatory.

### What is a grease trap and how does it work?

A grease trap is a small reservoir built into the wastewater piping, a short distance from a grease producing area. Baffles in the reservoir retain the wastewater long enough for the grease to congeal and rise to the surface. The grease can then be removed and disposed of properly. A diagram of a typical grease trap is presented in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1

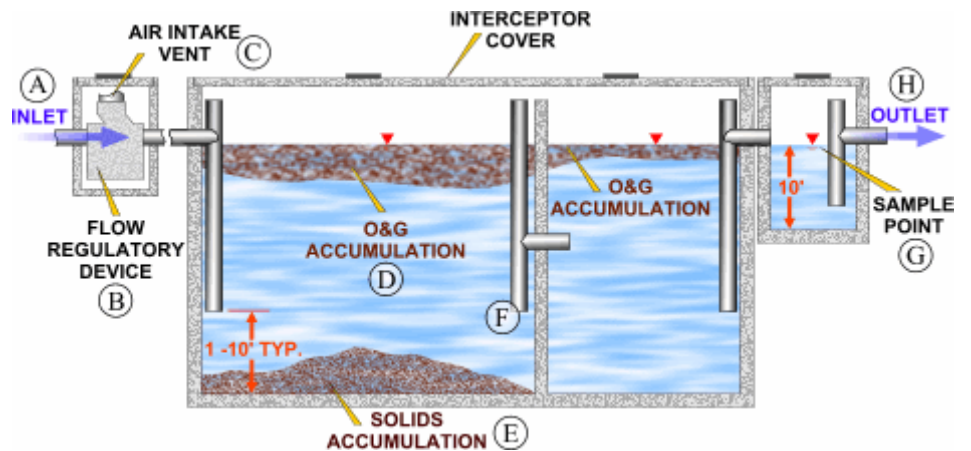


*Grease trap maintenance is typically performed by maintenance staff or other employees. Grease interceptors are usually cleaned by grease haulers or recyclers.*

### What is a grease interceptor?

A grease interceptor is a vault with a minimum capacity of between 500 and 750 gallons, located on the exterior of the building. The capacity of the interceptor provides adequate residence time so that wastewater has time to cool, allowing the remaining grease not collected by the traps time to congeal and rise to the surface, where it accumulates until the interceptor is cleaned. Figure 2 illustrates a typical grease interceptor.

Figure 2





## How do I clean my grease trap/interceptor?

Grease trap maintenance is typically performed by maintenance staff or other employees of a restaurant or other food service establishment/facility. Please refer to the *Grease Trap Maintenance Guide* for more information on how to clean and maintain your grease trap.

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*Refer to the "Grease Trap Maintenance Guide" for useful information about how to clean your grease trap.*

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Grease interceptors are usually cleaned by grease haulers or recyclers. Several vendors operate in the Lakeport area, providing both cleaning (grease removal) and disposal services. Please refer to the *Restaurant Oil and Grease Rendering Guide* for more information or check the local phone book for grease removal services.

## Can you recommend a maintenance schedule?

All grease interceptors should be cleaned at least once every 60 days. Some establishments will find it necessary to clean their traps more often than that. If you find that you have to clean it often (every month), you may want to consider installing a larger trap or interceptor.

Be sure to record all of your maintenance activity on the *Maintenance Log*. A copy can be obtained from the City's Utilities Department or from the Lake County Department of Environmental Health.

## Do I need a grease interceptor?

The short answer is yes. Pursuant to City code, any establishment that introduces grease or oil into the drainage and sewage system in quantities large enough to cause line blockages or hinder sewage treatment is required to install a grease interceptor. However, the size and type of interceptor may vary.

Interceptors *and* grease traps are usually required for high volume restaurants (full menu establishments operating 16 hours/day and/or serving 500+ meals/day) and large commercial establishments, such as hotels, hospitals, factories, or school kitchens.

However, even small volume (fast food or take-out restaurants with limited menus, minimum dishwashing, and/or minimal seating capacity) and medium volume establishments (full menu establishments operating 8-16 hours/day and/or serving 100-400 meals/day) can generate significant amounts of grease. In order to ensure that the sewer remains free of grease and fully functional, the City is requiring all establishments to install interceptors.

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*You can make money by recycling your used yellow (cooking) grease.*

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## Is the grease trap/interceptor I have adequate?

It depends. The number of drains or fixtures connected to the trap and the maintenance schedule dictate whether a trap is effective at preventing grease from entering the sanitary sewer system. The bottom line: if grease is clogging your lateral or the City main near your establishment, most likely your trap is inadequate. Please feel free to contact the City's Compliance Officer at 263-3578 if you have concerns about your grease trap or would like to discuss your particular grease issue.

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The County's Environmental Health Department will conduct an inspection of your grease trap/interceptor at least once a year during a regular health inspection.

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## Who inspects grease traps/interceptors and what are the criteria for those inspections?

The County's Environmental Health Department will identify your grease trap/interceptor at least once a year during a regular health inspection. The City's Compliance Officer is trained to inspect the unit(s), if needed. Inspections may be frequent depending on any identified issues or concerns related to FOG in the sanitary sewer that may be occurring in or around your facility.

For additional information about grease trap/interceptor inspections, please call the City's Compliance Officer at 263-3578 or by E-mail at [compliance@cityoflakeport.com](mailto:compliance@cityoflakeport.com).

## Who determines if I need a grease trap or interceptor?

Generally speaking, City Code requires every restaurant or other food service establishment that produces grease to install and maintain a grease trap/interceptor, unless a variance is requested.

If a variance is requested, a variance study will be performed, which will examine the feasibility of installing a grease trap at a subject location. The Community Development/Utilities Director, otherwise known as the CLMSD Director, will make the determination as to whether a grease trap is required or if it is infeasible.



## What if I don't install a grease interceptor?

City code requires any establishment that introduces grease or oil into the drainage and sewage system in quantities large enough to cause line blockages or hinder sewage treatment is required to install a grease interceptor. Failure to do so may result in remuneration and fines up to \$25,000 or more. However, you may request a variance, if you feel your circumstance warrants consideration. There are fees associated with this request. Please contact the Compliance Officer for more information.

## How can I get in compliance?

If your business does not have a grease interceptor, and you produce fats, oils and grease, you will need to request a grease trap/interceptor installation permit. Contact the City's Community Development Department at 263-3056 for more information and to request an application.

If you have a grease trap or interceptor and believe that it may be ineffective at keeping FOG out of the sanitary sewer (i.e. needs frequent cleaning, backups occurring in kitchen, etc.), you may need to upgrade or replace your existing grease trap/interceptor. A grease trap/interceptor installation permit will be required for this as well.

To assess your grease discharge practices and determine if your efforts to minimize FOG are adequate, complete a *Food Service Assessment Checklist*. Contact the City's Compliance Officer at 263-3578 to receive a copy or to discuss your particular grease trap or interceptor issue.

## Contact Information

Please contact the City's Compliance Officer at 263-3578, or by E-mail at [compliance@cityoflakeport.com](mailto:compliance@cityoflakeport.com), for more information or to discuss your particular FOG situation. We're here to help you succeed!

Mailing Address:

Lakeport City Hall  
225 Park Street  
Lakeport, CA 95453

(707) 263-3578 or via email [compliance@cityoflakeport.com](mailto:compliance@cityoflakeport.com)

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