

Grease Disposal Guide: Avoid Clogs, Fines and Damaged Pipes!

Do you own a restaurant or bar? Are you a lunch truck vendor? Worried about grease clogging your pipes at home?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, these guidelines will help you avoid clogged drains, pipes and sewers as well as possible **finances and penalties.**

It's a little known fact, but common grease, oil, and fats from cooking are behind some the biggest problems in our sewer system. Much of that grease gets into sewers from kitchen cleanups and hosing down restaurant floors. Pouring cooking grease into sinks, tubs or sewer inlets can cause problems as well.

Grease: Why it's a big deal

Grease, oils, and fats will not break down in water. That means the grease that goes into the sewers doesn't go away.

Instead, grease builds up inside sewers, eventually blocking them. Once sewers are blocked, sewage can back up and spill out into homes and businesses. Cleaning up grease buildups and blockages in the sewers can be very costly for the City and the Philadelphia Water Department. We all end up paying for that work through higher water and sewer bills.

PWD does not recommend using soaps, detergents, bacteria-based solutions and caustic agents like drain cleaners because they do little to combat grease and can cause serious damage to your drains and plumbing. While there are several types of grease-eating bacteria, sometimes called "wonder bugs," on the market, they are not effective enough in the sewer system to eliminate grease buildup or blockages.

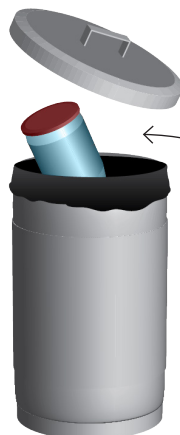
Don't Pay the Price for Improper Grease Disposal!



If a container of cooking oil or grease that has been disposed of improperly is traced back to a business that you own, you will be billed for the cost of facility repair, sampling, and clean up. You may have to pay hefty fines and could even be forced to close your business.

Dispose of Your Grease the Right Way

So how should you deal with your grease problems? Here are some steps you should take, depending on whether you are at home or run a business:

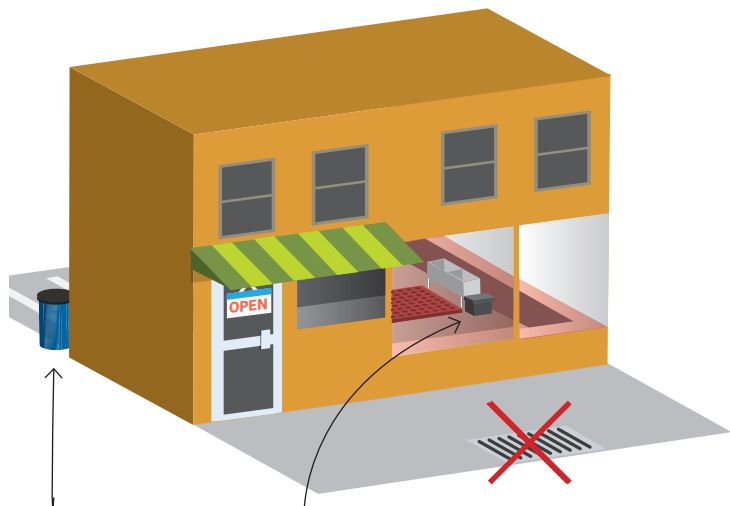


For Homes:

Make sure that all animal fats and other grease are disposed of as solid waste.

Dispose of fats or grease in garbage bags so it can be hauled away by the Streets Department.

For Commercial Establishments:



Use the services of a reputable cooking oil disposal and recycling provider.

Install and maintain grease traps to collect grease.

NEVER hose or dump grease into any drains or inlets.

Restaurants and other businesses dealing with significant amounts of grease must install devices such as grease traps. A grease trap is designed to prevent grease, oil, solids, and other debris from entering the sewer system.

Grease traps must be properly sized and regularly maintained. Emptying the grease trap involves more than skimming off the surface grease. A reliable pumper should pump the trap out to remove collected oil, grease and sediment at regular intervals. Grease traps should also be checked periodically for backups, foul odors, and high Biochemical Oxygen Demand levels to ensure they are functioning correctly.

Remember: the grease trap is only meant to handle grease that gets into drains from washing dishes and cooking utensils. It does not allow you to dump your grease into drains.

Leave It to the Pros: What to Look For

You should have contracts with reputable cooking oil disposal and recycling service providers. They must give you a service agreement stating how often, where, and what quantities are involved in the disposal of your cooking oil and grease. Use a company that will remove waste from and clean grease traps and provide you with paper records of these services.


When possible, choose a rendering service that can also respond to accidental cooking oil and grease spills at your business. If a rendering service with accidental spill response is not available, hire a separate provider who can help quickly in the event of a spill.

Do some research and find the best cooking oil and grease disposal services to suit your needs—doing so will save you money and help you avoid fines in the long run!

More Information and Contact List

For more information, contact the Philadelphia Water Department:

 www.phila.gov/water

 215.685.6300