Fats, Oils, Grease (FOG) Best Management Practices

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Keep FOG out of the Drains

Fats, oils and grease (FOG) in the sanitary sewer system is an important environmental, public health, and maintenance issue. FOG builds up in sewer lines and restricts the capacity of the pipes. Attempts to keep the sewer collection system flowing is very costly and time consuming. When best management practices are not followed, FOG can also cause sanitary sewer overflows, which negatively impact public health and the environment by causing backups and discharge of raw sewage into streets, storm drains, and creeks. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of California require local utilities, including Stanford, to take steps to reduce sewer overflows, the majority of which are caused by grease blockages.

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Follow These Tips:

- Pour or scrape greasy or oily food waste into a container or jar.
- Allow grease to cool or freeze in the container before throwing it in the trash.
- Mix liquid vegetable oil with an absorbent material such as cat litter or coffee grounds in a sealable container before throwing it in the trash.

Do NOT:

- Pour fat, oil or grease down drains or garbage disposals.
- Use hot water to rinse grease off cookware, utensils, dishes or surfaces.

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What’s a Sanitary Sewer Overflow?

Sanitary sewer overflows occur when wastewater being transported via underground pipes overflows through a manhole, clean-out, and/or home service laterals. Sewage spills can potentially cause health hazards, damage to homes and businesses, and threaten the environment.

Don’t let it happen to you!

Preventing sewer backups from FOG blockages saves Stanford money and protects the environment. If a resident regularly pours grease down a drain, it will eventually cool, harden and form a blockage in the sewer pipe. Sewage can then back up through floor drains and toilets at the lowest point in the building. Cleanup can be invasive and expensive.

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Additional Resources

For additional information on the regulations, resources, and best management practices, please visit Palo Alto’s Water Pollution Prevention website at http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pwd/pollution/, then select “Fats, Oils, Grease” from the list.

If you have any questions, please contact Erica Kudyba at EKudyba@Stanford.edu or 650-736-1946

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