

Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) Best Management Practices



Stanford Water Resources
& Civil Infrastructure
suwater.stanford.edu/fog



Keep FOG out of the Drains

Fats, oils, and grease (FOG) in the sanitary sewer system is a maintenance issue that impacts the environment and public health. FOG can build up in sewer lines and restrict the capacity of the pipes. Repeated maintenance 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.

Follow These Tips:

- Pour or scrape greasy or oily food waste into a compost container.
- Mix liquid vegetable oil with an absorbent material such as paper towels, newspaper, or an old pizza box before throwing it in the compost bin.
- Have a significant amount of FOG? Bring it to a Palo Alto Household Hazardous Waste Station: cityofpaloalto.org/hazwaste
- Don't have compost service? Dispose of grease in the trash through the same methods as noted above.

Do **NOT**:

- Pour fat, oils, or grease down drains or garbage disposals.
- Use hot water to rinse excess grease off cookware, utensils, dishes or surfaces without first removing as much FOG as possible.



Don't let it happen to you!

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. Instead, once FOG is poured from a frying pan into a compost bin, wipe the pan with a paper towel before it is washed. The key idea is to prevent as much FOG from going down the drain as possible. The absolute prevention of FOG entering the sewer drain is impossible; however, by following best management practices, the chance of having a sanitary sewer overflow is reduced. Preventing sewer backups from FOG blockages saves money and protects the environment.

Additional Resources

For additional information on the regulations, resources, and best management practices, please visit Palo Alto's Water Pollution Prevention website at:

www.cleanbay.org/residential#Fats, Oils, and Grease

If you have any questions, please contact the Water Information line at 650-725-8030.

