

serious**
a quick guide to...

fats, oils & greases



If you work in catering, disposing of fats, oils & greases (FOGs) can be a real problem. Sewers are designed for sewage, not the pipe-clogging residue of umpteen Sunday roasts.

If FOGs are poured down sinks and drains they can cause blockages, and if they get into rainwater pipes and gullies they can pollute streams and rivers. For this reason the law has some very strict requirements for how these materials should be dealt with – and some equally tough penalties for anyone who fails to meet them.

In liquid form, FOGs may not look harmful. But as soon as they cool, they congeal and harden. They also stick to the inner lining of drainage pipes, restricting flow and ultimately causing blockages. While bleaches and detergents may appear to solve the problem in the short term, the mixture soon returns to thick or solid fat.

It's causing a big, fat problem for businesses. There are approximately 200,000 sewer blockages throughout the UK every year, and a massive 75% are caused by FOGs. Clearing the blockages costs the catering industry millions of pounds a year. Not only that, but bad practice can result in prosecution, negative publicity and huge disruptions to your business.

disposing of oil

Waste oil can come from deep fat fryers, woks, frying pans and baking trays. Instead of pouring them away, collect waste oils and cooking fats in airtight containers to prevent nasty smells and avoid attracting rats. Store the containers in a secure area away from drains. Better still, arrange for them to be collected and recycled.

grease management systems

There are lots of products out there to help you deal with kitchen grease and fat. We only work with the best manufacturers around, so the products here all get the Serious seal of approval.

The preactivated dosing system is a fit-and-forget dosing system that uses state-of-the-art biotechnology. Once a day, at a pre-programmed time (usually around midnight or the early hours), it releases a dose of specially selected bacteria and enzymes into the drainage system. The biological action breaks down FOGs to prevent blockages. Dosing systems need regular servicing. The system works with or without a grease trap and is really effective for packaged sewage treatment plants.

Active electromechanical systems are usually located under the kitchen sink or worktop. When kitchen waste flows into the unit, the FOGs separate from the main effluent and are transferred into an external container. Active electromechanical systems need daily attention and servicing.

External multistage grease traps separate grease and fat from other liquid waste using a series of baffles. As liquid flows into the trap, grease and fat rise to the surface, while heavier food debris sinks to the bottom. They're really effective, but only if used in the right location – too far from the kitchen, and grease cools and solidifies before it gets there. They also need emptying regularly.

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your business and the law

Building Regulations BS8301 1985 – no new-build site or refurbishment requiring building control input is allowed to open and operate without an effective grease-management system.

Water Industry Act 1991 – under Section III it's an offence to discharge into public sewers any matter that may interfere with the flow of wastewater.

Environmental Protection Act 1990 – complaints of 'statutory nuisance' (such as smells, effluent or build-up of rubbish) will be investigated by Environmental Health and may lead to prosecution.

Animal By-Products Regulations EC 1774/2002 (ABPR) – waste cooking oil can no longer be used in animal feed and must be collected by a licensed waste carrier.

Food Safety Act 1990 – local authorities can inspect your premises at any time, and failing to meet Food Hygiene Regulations can result in prosecution or shutting down your business.

quick checklist



a few do's...

- Make sure all your staff know how to dispose of FOGs, and why it's so important they do this properly.
- Scrape the leftover food and any traces of fat, oil or grease on plates, pans and baking trays into the bin before washing them up or putting them in the dishwasher.
- Collect waste oil in a suitable container and arrange for us to take it away.
- Use strainers in sink plug holes and empty the contents into the bin.
- Keep grease-management systems well looked after.



and a few don'ts...

- Don't put cooking oil, fat or grease down the sink or drain, **put food scrapings in the sink or sweep waste into drains.**
- Don't rely on harmful chemicals to clear blockages, **or pour boiling water down sinks or drains to try to dissolve fat and grease. Not only will it not work, it can be harmful to you and hazardous to the environment.**
- Beware of food macerators – appliances designed to chop and grind waste food into small pieces, supposedly to make it okay to dispose of in the drainage system. They don't work, because fats combine and harden again in the pipes.

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