

City of Arcata

Fats Oils and Grease (FOG) Policy (January 2025)

Policy Objectives:

To set forth policies, procedures and requirements governing the installation and maintenance of grease interceptors for Food Service Establishments (FSEs).

To protect the Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTW) from grease accumulation and blockages that may cause sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) in violation of General Order 2022-0103-DWQ, and the City of Arcata NPDES Permit (CA0022713), which can create public health hazards and subject the City to administrative penalties.

Authority:

Arcata Municipal Code (AMC) **SEC 7470.2. Additional Pretreatment Measures**
Interceptor Requirements

AMC **SEC 7460(Q) Prohibited Discharge Standards** FOG discharge prohibition

Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC)

AMC, **SEC 7490-7492.5 Enforcement**

Assigned Responsibility:

Director of Environmental Services, Deputy Director of Environmental Services - Streets and Utilities, Wastewater Operations and Compliance Manager, Environmental Compliance Analyst.

Applicability:

This policy shall apply to all Food Service Establishments (FSEs) that discharge wastewater to the City of Arcata POTW.

Definitions:

Best Management Practice (BMP): Schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and other management practices to reduce FOG discharges

Fats, Oils, and Greases (FOG): Organic polar compounds derived from animal and/or plant sources that contain multiple carbon chain triglyceride molecules.

Food Service Establishment (FSE): Those establishments primarily engaged in activities of preparing, serving, or otherwise making food available for consumption by the public. FSEs include but are not limited to restaurants, commercial kitchens, commissaries, caterers, hotels, schools, hospitals, prisons, correctional facilities, and care institutions.

A. Low Impact Food Service Establishment: An FSE whose discharge is expected to have a negligible amount of FOG and food solids due to two or more operational factors such as a minimal prep kitchen permit, use of disposable food ware, the absence of FOG or FOG-containing menu items, or where food service is not the primary product of the business. Classification as a low impact FSE is at the discretion of the Director of Environmental Services.

Grease Interceptor: Any plumbing appurtenance or appliance that intercepts fats, oil and grease from wastewater discharge.

A. Gravity Grease Interceptor: A plumbing appurtenance or appliance that is installed to intercept FOG from a wastewater discharge and is identified by volume, retention time, baffles, a minimum of two compartments, a minimum total volume of 300 gallons, and gravity separation. Gravity grease interceptors are generally installed outside.

B. Hydromechanical Grease Interceptor: A plumbing appurtenance or appliance that intercepts FOG from a wastewater discharge and is identified by flow rate, and separation and retention efficiency. The design incorporates air entrainment, hydromechanical separation, interior baffling, and/or barriers in combination.

1. Grease Removal Device: Any hydromechanical grease interceptor that automatically, mechanically removes FOG from the interceptor, the controls of which are either automatic or manually initiated.

2. Trapzilla or Approved Equal: A polyethylene large capacity hydromechanical grease interceptor.

FOG Requirements:

A. All FSEs where food is being prepared or kitchenware is being washed shall install an appropriately sized grease interceptor. Low impact FSEs may be excluded on a case-by-case basis.

B. New FSEs, and existing FSEs with a change in ownership, change in menu, planned plumbing improvements or tenant improvement plans subject to a building permit shall be evaluated and shall install an appropriately sized grease interceptor.

1. An FSE with a dishwasher and/or full-sized deep fryer (countertop deep fryers excluded) shall install an appropriately sized gravity grease interceptor in conformance with **SEC. 7470.2. Additional Pretreatment Measures.** All such facilities shall obtain prior approval from the Director of Environmental Services for sizing prior to receiving a building permit.
2. An FSE that is otherwise not required to install an appropriately sized gravity grease interceptor shall install an appropriately sized hydromechanical grease interceptor in conformance with **SEC. 7470.2. Additional Pretreatment Measures.** All such facilities shall obtain prior approval from the Director of Environmental Services for sizing prior to receiving a building permit.

C. All existing food service establishments that are determined by Environmental Services to have a reasonable potential to adversely impact the City's POTW will be required to install an appropriately sized grease interceptor or upgrade their current system to conform to the requirements of this policy. Facilities with undersized, nonfunctional, or irreparable grease interceptors as determined by the city will be required to install an appropriately sized grease interceptor or upgrade their current system to conform to the requirements of this policy. FSEs will be notified of their obligation to fulfill applicable requirements within the period specified in a Notice of Violation or similar enforcement document.

Plan Review:

All building plans for the new construction of FSEs, as well as alterations of an existing FSE that require a building permit, shall be approved by the Director of Environmental Services prior to issuance of the building permit.

Alternative Pretreatment Technology:

A. Devices required under this Policy shall be installed unless the Director of Environmental Services authorizes the installation of alternative pretreatment technology. The installation of alternative pretreatment technology will be considered where the installation of a grease

interceptor is not feasible due to physical constraints or other considerations.

B. Alternative pretreatment technology includes, but is not limited to, devices that are used to trap, separate and hold grease from wastewater and prevent it from being discharged into the sanitary sewer. All alternative pretreatment technology must be appropriately sized and approved by the Director of Environmental Services.

Installation Requirements:

A. Grease interceptor sizing and installation shall conform to the current edition of the Uniform Plumbing Code or other codes adopted by the City of Arcata.

B. Waste lines leading from sinks and drains, such as floor drains, floor sinks and other fixtures or equipment in FSEs where grease may be introduced into the POTW may be required to be connected to a grease interceptor.

C. Gravity grease interceptors shall be constructed in accordance with the City of Arcata Standard Drawings. If more than one interceptor is installed to achieve the required storage capacity, the interceptors shall be installed in series. All interceptors except the final one shall be designed as a single chamber interceptor.

D. Trapzilla Hydromechanical Grease Interceptors, or Approved Equal, shall have minimum flow rate of 75 gallons per minute unless specifically authorized by the Director of Environmental Services.

E. Grease interceptors shall be installed at a location where they are easily accessible for inspection, cleaning, and removal of intercepted grease.

G. Sanitary waste shall not be discharged to a grease interceptor.

H. No food waste disposal unit or dishwasher shall discharge into any hydromechanical grease interceptor. Variances, on a case-by-case basis, can be granted by the Director of Environmental Services.

1. Existing facilities with food waste disposal units that discharge to hydromechanical grease interceptors or discharge directly to the sanitary sewer shall remove the food waste disposal unit or connect it to a gravity grease interceptor with a minimum size of 1,000 gallons.

2. Existing facilities with dishwashers that discharge to hydromechanical grease interceptors shall install a prewash sink connected to the hydromechanical grease interceptor and re-route the dishwasher to discharge directly to the sanitary sewer. The FSE shall utilize the prewash sink prior to washing dishware in the dishwasher (mandatory BMP). Alternatively, the FSE may discharge the dishwasher to a gravity grease interceptor with a minimum size of 750 gallons.

Maintenance Requirements:

- A.** All grease interceptors/devices shall be maintained in efficient operating condition in conformance with **SEC. 7470.2. Additional Pretreatment Measures.** Accumulated grease and sediment shall be removed as required. At a minimum, gravity grease interceptors, hydromechanical grease interceptors, Grease Removal Devices, Trapzillas (or Approved Equals), and Alternative Pretreatment Technologies shall be cleaned when the cumulative volume of sediment and grease equals or exceeds 25% of the total depth of the sediment, water, and grease layers.
- B.** No collected waste shall be introduced into the sanitary sewer.
- C.** All grease interceptors shall be kept free of non-food waste including but not limited to grit, rocks, gravel, sand, eating utensils, cigarettes, trash, towels, and rags.
- D.** The addition of chemicals, enzymes, emulsifiers, live bacteria or other grease cutters or additives used for purposes of grease reduction to a grease interceptor is specifically prohibited.
- E.** If the Director of Environmental Services determines that a grease interceptor is not being properly cleaned and maintained, the City may mandate a maintenance program. Maintenance programs shall include but are not limited to mandatory cleaning frequencies. Facilities that fail to adhere to a mandated maintenance program may be required to install additional or larger capacity grease interceptors.
- F.** FSE's shall maintain documentation of grease interceptor maintenance and cleaning onsite. Maintenance records shall be made available to city staff upon request. Facilities that fail to maintain and provide grease interceptor maintenance documents may be subject to enforcement actions.

G. Inspections

1. All grease interceptors/devices shall be inspected annually by designated city staff. Annual inspections will include, but are not limited to, verification that grease interceptors/devices are functioning properly, that kitchen BMPs are being followed and cleaning records are being maintained.
2. New facilities and newly installed grease interceptors/devices shall be inspected to determine the cleaning frequency for the new facility or grease interceptor. The facility will be assigned a maintenance/pump-out schedule based on the results of these inspections.
3. Grease interceptors may be subject to further inspection if the device fails and discharges effluent into the environment, kitchen practices or volume of service changes significantly, notes from waste haulers indicate the device needs further maintenance, or an enforcement action is issued to the FSE, and inspection is necessary to determine if the facility has come back into compliance.

Enforcement:

- A. Violations of this policy are subject to enforcement action described in **AMC SEC 7490-7492.5** including but not limited to Administrative Enforcement Remedies, Administrative Fines, Civil Penalties, Criminal Prosecution, and Supplemental Enforcement Actions.