



**UTILITIES DEPARTMENT  
PRETREATMENT SECTION  
270 W 13<sup>TH</sup> Street, Yuma, AZ 85364  
(928) 373-4600**

July 2023

**RE: Fats, Oils and Grease Management (FOG) Program**

Dear Food Service Establishment Owner:

**THE PROBLEM**

Fat, Oils and Grease (FOG), primarily generated from restaurants and other food service establishments, are major contributors to City sewer line blockages, backups and overflows.

Fat, Oils and Grease from cooking, dishwashing, food preparation, clean up activities, improper disposal practices and inadequate grease interceptor maintenance can cause grease to collect and harden in sewers causing excessive City maintenance costs for cleaning lines. FOG can also interfere with the operation of wastewater pumps and treatment processes and can become a serious public health hazard if raw sewage overflows to streets, parking lots and storm sewers that ultimately discharge to the Colorado River.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Food service establishments are responsible for properly managing FOG generated from their kitchen operations. This includes but is not limited to the use and maintenance of approved grease interceptors, proper disposal of oil/grease wastes and education of employees on effective methods and procedures commonly used to eliminate FOG from entering the City sewer system (Best Management Practices or BMPs).

**LEGAL AUTHORITY**

Yuma City Code, Chapter 191, Section 191-02.1 (B) Specific Prohibitions

3) Solid or viscous substances in amounts which will cause obstruction of the flow in the POTW resulting in Interference but in no case solids greater than one half inch (1/2") in any dimension;

*And*

17) Fats, oils, or greases of animal or vegetable origin in quantities that cause or contribute to obstructions;

Other applicable regulations include the National Pretreatment Standards: Prohibited Discharges located in CFR 40, Part 403.5 and the USEPA proposed rule on Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSO) published in Federal Register Volume No. 66 dated 1/14/2001.

- **PLEASE NOTE: FOOD SERVICE BUSINESS OWNERS CAN AND WILL BE HELD FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH DAMAGES AND CLEAN UP OF GREASE RELATED SEWER BLOCKAGES AND OVERFLOWS.**

The City of Yuma Pretreatment Division is in the development process of implementing a more detailed and specific Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Program to address the increasing costs of sewer maintenance and public health concerns from grease-related sewer overflows.

## **EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH**

The City of Yuma respects the concerns of small business owners, especially those in the food service industry who may have limited time and resources other than food preparation, who historically have a high employee turnover rate, and may not have a clear understanding of the impact of their kitchen operations on the municipal sewer system in terms of high maintenance costs incurred by the City (and taxpayers) or the potential health hazards from sewer overflows.

Therefore, the City of Yuma Pretreatment Division is initiating an educational outreach program to food service establishments in an effort to explain the community's concerns associated with sewer FOG problems and to develop a working relationship with affected businesses that will encourage proactive and cost-effective solutions to this important issue.

The ultimate objective of this effort is simple: **Eliminate FOG from the sewer system.** Toward that objective, City Pretreatment Inspectors will meet with each food establishment owner (or manager), inspect the facility to determine how FOG is being managed, and explain effective methods and practices (BMPs) that will assist your business in reducing their discharge of fats, oils and grease to the sewer system. The inspector may also make recommendations that are necessary for the business to comply with local regulations. It is important to point out, however, that the success or failure of this outreach effort is dependent on the **willingness** of the food establishment to implement the necessary steps to eliminate FOG from their wastewater discharge and to **voluntarily** comply with current utility regulations.

## **RESOURCES**

This folder contains very useful information to assist food service establishments in significantly reducing the amount of FOG that is discharged to the municipal sewer system. Please take the time to review the materials and start a FOG program for your kitchen operations. In the folder, you will find various fact sheets, forms, manuals and other tools to help facilitate FOG management in your establishment. The folder includes:

- Information on the design, operation, inspection, and maintenance of grease interceptors.

- Educational and other materials to train employees on methods and procedures to prevent FOG from being discharged into your wastewater (Best Management Practices).
- Posters and forms to reinforce employee use of BMPs and inspection/maintenance recordkeeping.
- Suggestions and helpful hints to successfully begin and maintain a FOG management program at your establishment.
- A list of useful resources and phone numbers that may be helpful in your pollution prevention efforts.

## **BENEFITS**

Many municipalities have reported impressive benefits by implementing a Fats, Oils and Grease Program. They have found that through the education of FOG dischargers and the promotion of a cooperative effort between food service establishments and the city, FOG levels in the sewer system can be dramatically reduced. Not only does this provide financial benefits to the City and taxpayers through decreased sewer maintenance costs, but these pollution prevention measures can also reduce unforeseen costs to the food establishment by preventing blockages before they occur (instead of calling a plumber for expensive emergency cleaning of your sewer lines or grease interceptor during a busy dinner rush hour!). Also, reduction of sanitary sewer overflows results in reduced potential public exposure to dangerous pathogens inherent in raw sewage, as well as the reduction of potential FOG pollutants being discharged into the Colorado River Ecosystem.

It should be noted that there are some municipalities who have had to resort to strict measures such as issuing wastewater discharge permits and taking legal enforcement action (including monetary penalties) to ensure that FOG dischargers comply with established regulations.

## **GETTING STARTED**

Sometimes, getting started seems to be the hardest part of any new program. Hopefully, everything you will need is provided in this folder to begin your program as soon as possible. Please take that first step toward implementing a successful program. Grease interceptor inspection and proper maintenance, combined with effective employee training and continued enforcement will be your key to success.

- **REMEMBER: PROPER MAINTENANCE OF EVEN THE POOREST GREASE INTERCEPTOR WILL PROVIDE BETTER RESULTS THAN A LACK OF MAINTENANCE OF THE BEST GREASE INTERCEPTOR!**

If you are having problems getting started, require additional information, or have any questions regarding the management of Fats, Oils and Grease in the food service industry, please contact the City of Yuma Pretreatment Division at 373-4600.