

Fats, Oil and Grease (FOG) Control Program Project Overview

Council District No.: All Council Districts

DESCRIPTION:

On August 5, 2001, the City's FOG Control Ordinance became effective. The Ordinance provides the legal authority for the FOG Control Program to regulate approximately 10,000 Food Service Establishments (FSEs) located in the City of Los Angeles. The City's FOG Control Ordinance requires the following:

- All FSEs that generate grease are required to obtain an industrial wastewater permit.
- FSEs are required to pay a one-time \$356 application fee, and a \$244 inspection and control fee annually.
- FSEs will be inspected a minimum of once per year.
- All FSEs will be required to use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce grease discharged to the sewer system (e.g.: store waste grease in barrels to haul off site, scrape remaining food off plates).
- Any FSE that is known to cause grease-related sewer spills or fails to implement BMPs will be required to install a grease interceptor or grease trap when it is not feasible to install a grease interceptor.
- All new construction of FSEs must include installation of a grease interceptor.
- All FSEs planning a remodel valued at \$100,000 or more will be required to include installation of a grease interceptor.
- Exemptions, conditional waivers, or variances will be available to FSEs that do not generate grease, do not cause grease related sewer blockages, and/or have limited space on their property that makes it impossible to install a grease interceptor.
- Garbage grinders are prohibited in FSEs except when allowed by the Director of the Bureau of Sanitation.

LOCATION:

The approximately 10,000 FSEs regulated under the FOG program are located throughout the City of Los Angeles.

PURPOSE/GOAL:

The goal is to inspect 10,000 FSEs between October 15, 2001 and March 15, 2004 and issue Industrial Wastewater Permits to FSEs that meet the permit requirements specified in Section 64.30 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (Ordinance).

BENEFITS:

The FOG Program benefits include:

- Reduction in the number of grease-related sewer overflows and the exposure of the City to regulatory fines and penalties as a result of the overflows.
- Allowing FSEs to implement low cost source control practices, Best Management Practices (BMPs), rather than installing grease interceptors (approximate cost: \$20,000 or more per restaurant) thereby saving the FSE community approximately \$200 million.

ESTIMATED COSTS/FUNDING:

The City Council approved a budget request to pay for salaries of 39 inspectors, engineers, and clerical staff, sewer cleaning contracts, sewer maintenance equipment, staff training, and a mediator to help address outstanding issues. The total cost of the program is approximately \$3.5 million.

SCHEDULE:

The implementation of the FOG Program began on October 15, 2001 and the plan is to inspect all 10,000 FSE by March 15, 2004. Industrial Wastewater Permits will be issued to FSEs that meet the permit requirements specified in Section 64.30 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (Ordinance). Thereafter, all FSEs will be inspected once per year.

STATUS:

- As of September 30, 2003, the Bureau of Sanitation has inspected 12,275 FSEs and informed them of all applicable Ordinance and BMP requirements. 15,697 follow-up inspections have been conducted on these facilities to verify compliance.

- As of September 30, 2003, the Bureau of Sanitation has issued 7,164 Industrial Waste Permits to FSEs and 2,718 FSEs were determined to be exempt from permit requirements. An FSE that does not generate FOG during food preparation qualifies for an exemption.
- As of September 30, 2003, the Bureau of Sanitation has issued 1,131 Notices of Violations to FSEs, most for failure to apply for an industrial wastewater permit.
- As of September 30, 2003, the Bureau of Sanitation has conducted 5,886 Watershed Protection related inspections. Initiated on May 2, 2002, these inspections collect baseline information regarding FSE's refuse disposal practices, drain connections, and wastewater discharge practices.
- As of September 30, 2003, the Bureau of Sanitation has hired 38 of the 39 staff required to implement the FOG Program.

Commonly Asked Questions on the FOG

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1. What is FOG?

FOG means “Fats, Oil and Grease” found in most kitchens and FSEs. The main contribution of FOG from FSEs is from discharge of used grease from cooking processes. Also, many of the foods we eat contain FOG; these include meats, sauces, gravies, salad dressings, deep-fried dishes, cookies, pastries, cheeses, butter, and many others. Generally, food scraps washed down the drain, also, contribute to FOG in the sewers.

Grease accumulation in the sewer system causes obstruction by constricting flow or outright blockage of the sewer pipes, and interfering with the normal operation of the wastewater treatment system.

2. What are Best Management Practices?

Best management practices are a series of activities that effectively reduce the amount of waste generated in a business. In case of FSEs and FOG control, BMPs include:

- ✦ Using less oil and liquid oil instead of solid grease or lard;
- ✦ Dry wiping all dishes, pots, and pans before putting them in the dishwasher;
- ✦ Collecting and disposing used oil through a licensed grease hauler instead of pouring it down the drain;
- ✦ Use of disposable paper products instead of dishware when possible;
- ✦ Capturing the oil accumulated in ventilation and exhaust hoods;
- ✦ Cleaning grease traps on a regular basis;
- ✦ Keeping grease traps and interceptors well maintained and properly operating.

3. Will every FSE need to obtain an Industrial Waste Permit?

FSEs that generate grease will need to obtain an Industrial Wastewater Permit. Those FSEs that do not have the potential of discharging grease are exempt from permit requirements. Examples of exempt FSEs are: produce markets, juice bars, cold delis, convenience stores, etc. However, all FSEs are required to implement BMPs, regardless of their permit status.

4. What are the fees associated with an Industrial Wastewater Permit?

FSEs are required to pay a one-time \$356 Application Fee when obtaining a permit and a \$244 Inspection and Control Fee is applied annually.

5. Is a permitted FSE automatically required to install a grease interceptor?

No. Installation of a grease interceptor must be included for new FSEs undergoing construction, and existing FSEs that are undergoing a remodeling project with costs greater than \$100,000. For other existing FSEs, installation of grease interceptors will not be required unless the FSEs fail to properly implement BMPs, or are located in problematic areas that continually experience grease-related sewer blockages due to the slope of the street or the sewer pipe size.

6. What is a Conditional Waiver and who will qualify for it?

Existing FSEs that implement BMPs and effectively control grease discharge from their operation will qualify for “Conditional Waiver” from grease interceptor installation. Conditional Waiver will be included in Industrial Wastewater Permit and will be in effect for as long as the FSE continues to show proper implementation of BMPs.

7. What is a Variance and who will qualify for it?

“Variance to allow alternative grease removal device” is issued when a FSE that is required to install a grease interceptor can show that the installation is not feasible due to space constraints or other similar considerations. The Bureau, by issuing this Variance, will authorize installation of an alternative grease removal device such as a grease trap.

8. How often can a FSE expect to see an Industrial Waste Inspector? Will the business have advance notice?

Industrial Waste Inspectors will inspect FSEs at a minimum of once per year. Inspections will be conducted without advance notice and inspectors will observe the normal operations at the FSE.

9. How are you going to ensure that businesses that have grease interceptors and grease traps are maintaining them correctly and that the grease accumulated by the FSE are disposed of correctly and not thrown down the sink or toilet?

To ensure that BMPs are properly implemented in a FSE, Industrial Waste Inspectors will inspect all FSEs on an annual basis. During inspection, they will ask for maintenance logs and manifest records (receipts) from licensed grease haulers. These records will verify compliance with proper waste disposal requirements.

10. What is being done to address the residential grease contribution?

The residential areas contribute less than half of the grease loading in the city sewers. The Bureau of sanitation has a residential outreach program that educates and informs the City residents about the effects of dumping oil and grease down the kitchen sinks.