



## Ventura Water/Wastewater - Restaurant FOG Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Q: What is the FOG Program?**

A: Ventura Water (City of Ventura) maintains the public sewer system serving your business and is required under state law to implement a comprehensive fats, oils and grease (FOG) control program to prevent the discharge of FOG into the sewer system. FOG from restaurants or other Food Service Establishments (FSEs) are a major cause of sewer line blockages and spills. The sewer spills often enter the stormwater drain system and waterways, becoming a significant cause of pollution in our waterways and ocean.

### **Q: Why do I need to submit plans to the City for FOG Program review?**

A: FOG Program review of Food Service Establishment plans is required to ensure that the new (or modified) facility meets current FOG Program rules and regulations. If additional FOG treatment equipment is required, the City Building and Safety Department may request a building/plumbing permit application with drawings. Building and Safety will distribute plans to Ventura Water/Wastewater Department for formal plan check.

### **Q: Do FOG program requirements apply to all FSEs?**

A: FSEs are categorized based on their potential for generating FOG as follows:

- Class 1 – FSEs with high grease generation based on cooking equipment volume of food served or type of food prepared (e.g., full service restaurants, cafeterias, etc.)
- Class 2 – FSEs with moderate grease generation based on cooking equipment volume of food served or type of food prepared (e.g., single service, fast food restaurants)
- Class 3 – FSEs with low grease generation based on no cooking of raw food (e.g., sandwich shops, etc.)
- Class 4 – FSEs with no significant grease generation engaged only in reheating, hot holding or assembly of ready to eat food products (e.g., ice cream shops, coffee shops, etc.)

The applicability of each FOG program requirement can vary depending on the classification of each facility.

### **Q: Does my FSE facility require a grease control device?**

A1: Existing Class 1, 2, and 3 facilities

- Connected to priority cleaning locations
- Determined to have reasonable potential to adversely impact the public sewer system
  - Found to be cause of or contributor to sewer blockage or SSO
  - Chronic non-compliance with FOG regulations
  - Existing device is dilapidated or inoperable
- Class 1 and 2 require GGI (for all fixtures/drains discharging grease-laden water)
- Class 3 may require approved GCD (for facilities discharging hot grease)

A2: New Class 1 & 2 FSEs and Class 3 facilities discharging hot grease:

- New Construction
- Remodel - Change in Operations
  - Under slab plumbing
  - Change in size or type of cooking equipment
  - Increased seating or size of kitchen area
- Class 1 and 2 require GGI (for all fixtures/drains discharging grease-laden water)
- Class 3 may require approved GCD (for facilities discharging hot grease)

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### **Q: Are fats and grease the only pollutant my restaurant should be concerned with.**

A: No. Restaurants often discharge dishwasher detergents, chemicals for washing vegetables, disposal of meat products, surfactants, pesticides, harmful bacteria, food coloring, hormones, enzymes, grease, and chlorinated solvents into the wastewater. Hotels can unload many of the same harmful impurities that plug wastewater lines with even more surfactants from cleaners, lint and chemicals used in laundry operations.

### **Q: How do grease, water and detergents react toward one another?**

A: Oil and water do not normally mix. But during dish or pan washing, surfactants are added to the wash water. Surfactant molecules grab the oil on one end and water on the other. Surfactants also reduce surface tension of the water (called wetting) and create smaller oil droplets. They float around in your three bowl sink or dishwasher until rinse water swishes them away, leaving the plates clean.

### **Q: How does a trap or interceptor remove grease from the wastewater?**

A: Wastewater laden with grease requires a holding container (interceptor) and time to separate the oil from the water. Time allows grease droplets to rise to the surface where it is retained in the grease blanket until cleaning/removal. Two impeding characteristics of restaurant wastewater are: size of oily droplets and temperature. Large droplets (100 to 200 microns) rise quickly like bubbles to the top and become trapped. Oily droplets less than 100 microns take longer to rise. More time is needed and a larger container provides more time to cool and separate.

### **Q: What size grease interceptor is required?**

A. FSEs eligible to install a Grease Removal Device in lieu of an interceptor, may install a 70 gallon or larger GRD when no dishwasher is connected, or 101 gallon or larger GRD if a dishwasher is connected. These may be located outdoors, or indoors if located away from food preparations areas and the location is approved by the Ventura County Health Department.

### **Q: Which fixtures/drains are required to be connected to the grease interceptor?**

A: All potential grease bearing fixtures and drains (cooking equipment drains, pot sinks, 3-comp sinks, mop sinks, dishwasher pre-rinse sinks, prep sinks, floor sinks, floor drains) in the food preparation, cooking and cleanup areas of the facility are required to be connected to the grease interceptor. Bathroom sanitary drain lines cannot be connected to the grease removal device.

### **Q: Is my existing FSE required to make any changes?**

A: Yes. The updated policy includes implementation of the following:

- Expanded Kitchen Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Removal of existing garbage disposals (installation of disposals in new facilities is prohibited)

Additionally, your facility may be reevaluated to determine if existing grease control devices and maintenance practices are sufficient to protect the sewer system, based on association with sewer line blockages/overflows or program compliance history.

### **Q: Will my food service establishment be inspected?**

A: Yes. Soon after your facility begins operations, a FOG Inspector will conduct an inspection of your facility to assist you with your understanding of the Program. Routine FOG inspections are then conducted on a regular basis to ensure continued compliance with the FOG Program rules and regulations.

### **Q: Is there additional FOG Program information available?**

A: Yes. The complete *FOG Rules and Regulations* can be viewed at [www.cityofventura.net/water/fog](http://www.cityofventura.net/water/fog).