

Environmental Services Department

Policy Clarification Sheet

Fats, Oils, and Grease Program (FOG)

FOG Management Policy



Policy Overview

Purpose: The City of Tacoma’s FOG Management Policy aims to protect the city’s wastewater collection systems, pumping stations, and treatment works from the accumulation of Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG). By regulating Food Service Establishments (FSEs), the policy helps prevent blockages, sewer overflows, and environmental hazards that can result from improper FOG disposal.

Key Policy Definitions:

- **Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG):** Any fats, oils, or grease generated during food preparation.
- **FOG Device:** A device used to separate FOG from liquid waste before entering the sanitary sewer system.
- **Food Service Establishments (FSEs):** Any facility that serves, prepares, processes, or packages food for consumption.
- **Gravity Grease Interceptors (GGIs):** Larger interceptors designed for facilities producing higher FOG volumes.
- **Hydromechanical Grease Interceptors (HGIs):** Smaller interceptors that rely on flow restriction to trap FOG.

Key Policy Requirements

1. Applicability

This policy applies to all FSEs that discharge wastewater containing FOG into Tacoma’s wastewater system. This includes businesses in Tacoma, as well as the interlocal agreement areas of Fife, Fircrest, Ruston, and portions of Pierce County.

2. Pretreatment of Wastewater

- **New Construction:** All new FSEs must install an appropriately sized grease removal device. Multi-unit commercial facilities must plan for individual grease protection for each unit.
- **Remodel of Existing Establishments:** Operational or structural changes may require additional or new FOG devices. Common triggers include increasing seating capacity, adding drive-through windows, or changing to a higher FOG-generating menu.

3. Restaurant Billing Rates

FSEs are billed based on wastewater discharge strength. Restaurants can qualify for a lower rate by meeting specific requirements, including installation of approved FOG devices and maintaining grease interceptor cleaning logs.

4. Maintenance and Cleaning Standards

- **GGI Standards:** Must be cleaned by a licensed vendor at least twice a year or when FOG exceeds 25% of a compartment's capacity.
- **HGI Standards:** Must be cleaned monthly or as needed based on the amount of FOG produced. Self-cleaning HGIs require a licensed pumper to clean every three months.

5. Documentation and Best Management Practices

- FSEs must document all maintenance activities and submit reports electronically within seven days. Hard copies must be kept for five years.
- Suggested best management practices include training staff, dry-wiping pots and pans, and keeping grease disposal containers accessible.

6. Legal Authority and Compliance

The City's authority is outlined in the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 12.08C.500 and 2.06, which authorize the enforcement of FOG policies and the issuance of penalties for non-compliance. Violations can result in fines or service charges, and the Environmental Services Director has the authority to suspend wastewater services if a violation poses an environmental risk.

Contact Information

For further details or questions about compliance, please contact:

City of Tacoma Environmental Services Department

FOG@cityoftacoma.org (253) 502-2120