Best Management Practices for Commercial Food and Restaurant Facilities

This guidance document provides the established Best Management Practices (BMPs) for fats, oil, and grease (FOG) encountered in commercial food and restaurant facilities operating in Lake County.

Grease Traps and Grease Interceptors

Two types of FOG collection devices are grease traps and grease interceptors. A grease interceptor is large (300-5,000 gallons), and is generally located outside and has all kitchen waste streams connected. A grease trap is much smaller (80-150 gallons), and can be located inside and generally is not connected to all kitchen waste streams. Both systems require diligent effort made by the commercial food and restaurant facility managers and staff to insure that they are regularly maintained and properly serviced by waste grease haulers.

Properly sized interceptors or grease traps are required for all commercial food and restaurant facilities operating in Lake County. (Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) §1001-1017.3, Lake County Sewer Use Ordinance §605)

Prevent Blockages in the Sewer System

1. Train kitchen staff and other employees about how they can help ensure BMPs are implemented.
   Reason: People are more will to support an effort if they understand the basis for it.
   Benefit: All of the subsequent benefits of BMPs will have a better chance of being implemented.

2. Post "No Grease" signs above sinks and on the front of dishwashers.
   Reason: Signs serve as a constant reminder for staff working in kitchens.
   Benefit: This will help minimize grease discharge to traps/interceptors and reduce the cost of cleaning and disposal.

3. Keep water less than 140ºF in all sinks, especially in pre-rinse sink before mechanical dishwasher.
   Reason: Temperatures in excess of 140º F in all sinks will dissolve grease, but the grease can recongeal/solidify in the sewer collection system as the water cools.
   Benefit: The facility will reduce energy costs for heating the water, reduce plugging of the sewer lateral, and need to hire someone to unplug it.

4. Use a three-sink dishwashing system (washing/rinsing/sanitizing in a 50-100 ppm bleach solution)
   Reason: The three-sink system uses water less than 140ºF, where a mechanical dishwasher requires a minimum temperature of 160ºF. The UPC prohibits the discharge of dishwasher water to grease traps.
   Benefit: The facility will reduce energy costs for heating the water and operating the dishwasher.

5. Recycle waste cooking oil.
   Reason: There are many waste oil recyclers in northern California.
   Benefit: There is less waste to dispose of.

6. "Dry-wipe" pots, pans, and dishware prior to dishwashing.
   Reason: By dry-wiping and disposing in the garbage, the material will not be sent to the grease traps.
   Benefit: This will reduce the amount of material collected in the grease trap and interceptors, and will lessen cleaning and maintenance costs.

7. Dispose of food waste by recycling or be depositing in with other solid waste.
   Reason: To divert food wastes away from grease traps and interceptors.
   Benefit: Recycling or solid waste disposal will reduce the frequency and cost of grease trap and interceptor cleaning.

Proper Maintenance Activities

1. Witness all grease or interceptor cleaning to ensure it is properly cleaned and operational.
   Reason: Grease trap-interceptor pumpers may take shortcuts, and not completely clean the trap/interceptor.
   Benefit: Witnessing this activity will ensure you are getting the full value for your money.

2. Clean under-sink grease traps weekly. If traps are more than 50% full, increase cleaning frequency.
   Reason: Weekly (or more frequent) cleaning of the grease trap by the facilities own staff will reduce the cost of cleaning the grease interceptor. If the facility does not have an interceptor, the grease trap is the only means of preventing grease from entering the sewer system.
   Benefit: Cleaning under-sink grease traps frequently will reduce the frequency and cost of grease interceptor cleaning.

3. Clean grease interceptors routinely.
   Reason: Clean routinely so grease accumulation does not cause the interceptor to operate poorly.
   Benefit: Routine cleaning will prevent plugging of the sewer lateral, and need to hire someone to unplug it.

4. Keep a maintenance log.
   Reason: The maintenance log serves as a record of the frequency and volume of cleaning the interceptor, and helps insure the interceptor is cleaned on a regular basis.
   Benefit: The maintenance log serves as an ongoing record or maintenance and cleaning service and can help the facility owner optimize the cleaning frequency and reduce cost.

Prevent FOG from entering creeks and Clear Lake through the storm drain system.

1. Cover outdoor grease and oil containers.
   Reason: Rainwater into open containers can cause overflow onto the ground leading to storm water collection systems, creeks, and may eventually end up in Clear Lake.
   Benefit: Avoidance of polluting streams and lakes, and possible fines.

2. Locate grease dumpsters and storage containers away from storm drain catch basins.
   Reason: The farther away from a catch basin, the more time someone has to discover and clean up a spill prior to it entering the storm drain system.
   Benefit: Avoidance of polluting streams and lakes, and possible fines.

3. Use absorbent pads or other non-free-flowing material to clean up spills around outdoor dumpsters.
   Reason: The use of absorbent pads or other non-free-flowing materials can help clean up grease and oil and prevent it from flowing into the storm drain system.
   Benefit: avoidance of polluting streams and lakes, and possible fines.

4. Use absorbent pads or other non-free-flowing material in the storm drain catch basins if grease dumpsters and containers must be located nearby.
   Reason: The use of absorbent pads or other non-free-flowing materials can help clean up grease and oil and prevent it from flowing into the storm drain system.
   Benefit: Avoidance of polluting streams and lakes, and possible fines.

5. Routinely clean kitchen exhaust filters.
   Reason: If grease and oil escape through the kitchen exhaust system, it can accumulate on exterior surfaces, eventually entering the storm drain system when it rains.
   Benefit: Avoidance of polluting streams and lakes, and possible fines.

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