

DEPARTMENT OF PLANS & PUBLIC WORKS

Grease Pretreatment ProgramFREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. Q. Why do food service businesses need grease pretreatment equipment installed in their facilities?

 A. Interceptors and grease traps help remove grease from wastewater so it doesn't cause grease buildup and blockages in the lines, and thus cause plumbing problems and sanitary sewer overflows (SSO's). SSO's are a public health and safety hazard because of the release of significant contaminants, particularly to water bodies. Grease traps and interceptors allow grease to separate and collect in a chamber and the acceptable water to flow past. Grease pretreatment equipment is standardized by the Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) for commercial food handling businesses, and is required by the City of Monterey's Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR).
- 2. Q. Do I still need a grease interceptor or trap if my kitchen doesn't generate any grease and I don't use grease in my cooking?
 - A. Yes, there is considerable fat, oil and grease in many food and beverage items. Examples are fats from butter, margarine, shortening, mayonnaise, milk and creams; oils from cooking oils or salad oil; and of course, grease from cooking or baking.
- 3. Q. What is the difference between a grease trap and a grease interceptor?
 - A. A grease interceptor is large (300 to 5,000 gallons), is located outside, and has all kitchen waste streams connected. A grease trap is much smaller (80 to less than 300 gallons), can be located inside, and not all kitchen waste streams are connected.
- 4. Q. How do I know what size grease trap or interceptor is right for my business?
 - A. The City of Monterey has an inspection report for almost all food service businesses within City boundaries which indicates the existence of, size, and appropriate sizing of grease pretreatment equipment for each facility. Sizing is based on how many meals are served or prepared per day in your facility, what type of foods you serve or prepare, and the size of sink(s) in relation to MRWPCA's grease interceptor sizing matrix. The size indicated by the MRWPCA grease interceptor sizing matrix is the size that has been found to be effective. The larger the interceptor/trap, the less maintenance is required.
- 5. Q. Who is the MRWPCA?
 - A. The Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency (MRWPCA) owns and operates the wastewater treatment facilities and regional sewage pump stations. Monterey is a member entity of MRWPCA and is responsible for

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sewer lines within the City before the lines connect to the MRWPCA system. The wastewater is conveyed to the MRWPCA's wastewater treatment plant in Marina.

6. Q. Can I get a waiver of the requirement to install an interceptor pursuant to the MRWPCA grease interceptor sizing matrix?

A. To accommodate the realities of doing business, available room, and cost, the City of Monterey has implemented the fee waiver system allowing businesses to meet the minimum allowable size for grease pretreatment equipment instead of the preferred sizing, AND pay \$180 per quarter toward City efforts to clean and maintain sanitary sewer mains and respond to sanitary sewer overflows caused by fat, oil and grease contributions from food service establishments. Most businesses can use this mechanism (minimum size plus fee waiver) to forego installing an interceptor.

7. Q. Why is there a waiver fee when a trap or insufficient interceptor is used?

A. Grease traps can only be connected to sinks. This means that dishwashing machines, floor drains and in some cases mop sinks are not receiving treatment. This means that the City sewer mains will still be receiving grease and it means that the City will still need to conduct frequent maintenance. The waiver fee pays for this maintenance.

8. Q. Does every MRWPCA member city have the same grease requirements?

A. Each City creates their own grease program, with intent to meet similar requirements required by the Waste Discharge Requirements. To be as fair as possible to businesses in light of space and cost constraints, Monterey is the only City that has created a waiver fee for businesses so they may forego installing an interceptor if minimum grease pretreatment standards are met for the facility in question.

9. Q. Why can't the City put in one large grease interceptor to control the grease?

A. One large grease interceptor is not a feasible option without replacing portions of the City sewer infrastructure, and would result in major odor problems.

10. Q. Why do I need a new larger grease interceptor or trap? I just put in what I thought was a properly sized trap several years ago.

A. Requirements for protecting public health, safety and water bodies have increased as we've learned more about sanitary sewers and their affects on humans and the environment. Further, small traps that were installed in the past have been found to be ineffective at keeping the fats, oils and grease out of the sewer system.

11. Q. What if the larger grease equipment doesn't fit in my kitchen?

A. Placement outside may be possible, or the manufacturers make "flush to floor" models that will fit in most kitchens.

12. Q. What happens if I remodel or sell my business, or I do not properly maintain my grease trap?

A. If you sell or remodel your business a reassessment of the grease removal equipment will be conducted under the Monterey Grease Program. Remodels requiring a building permit are required to install an interceptor per MRWPCA grease interceptor sizing matrix, unless a financial hardship is demonstrated.

13. Q. How much is the grease trap/interceptor going to cost?

A. Prices will vary due to plumbing configuration, brand selected, and ease of installation. Typical purchase and installation costs are \$3,000 to \$5,000 for an 80 gallon grease trap. Costs for interceptors vary significantly depending on construction/installation scope for each particular location and configuration, and therefore it is best to ask a plumber.

14. Q. Can you recommend a brand of grease trap or interceptor?

A. The City of Monterey website includes a link to the MRWPCA compiled list of local suppliers and equipment. It is the business owner's responsibility to select and install the proper grease removal equipment.

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15. Q. Which kitchen fixtures should I connect to the interceptor/trap and are there any that should not be connected?

A. **Grease Interceptors** – all grease producing fixtures except toilet/bathroom waste should be connected to the interceptor. **Grease Traps** – all possible kitchen fixtures (excluding garbage disposal and dishwasher) should be connected to the trap. No toilet/bathroom wastes are allowed to be connected. Your plumber can help you determine the connections.

16. Q. How do I properly clean a grease trap?

A. The City of Monterey website includes a link to instructions on proper cleaning of grease traps. Please go to www.Monterey.org.

17. Q. How often does the grease trap need to be cleaned?

A. The cleaning schedule can vary depending on the size of the interceptor, loading of fats, oils, & grease, and smell. Cleaning schedule should be set to keep the grease trap operating correctly and efficiently. For most grease traps, weekly cleaning is needed. Grease Interceptors are usually required to be cleaned (pumped) once every three months, but can vary.

18. Q. Is there a service or company that cleans grease interceptors and grease traps?

A. Yes, the City of Monterey website includes a link to grease trap and interceptor installers, manufacturers/suppliers, and liquid waste haulers that was compiled by MRWPCA. Please go to www.monterey.org.

19. Q. What are the maintenance log requirements?

A. The City of Monterey has some code standards for maintenance logs. Both the City Municipal Code and a sample maintenance log can be found at www.monterey.org for your reference. Monterey requires that a maintenance log be kept for traps as well as interceptors. Section 30-11 of the Monterey municipal code provides additional information, including but are not limited to the following:

Municipal Code Chapter 30-11, section (k) 3. All food service establishments or businesses required under this chapter to install and keep a grease trap or grease interceptor shall maintain a maintenance record for the grease trap or grease interceptor. This record shall include the date, the name of the person who performed cleaning and the disposal site of the waste. The record shall be posted in a conspicuous location and be available for review by the city's inspector or authorized representative at each routine inspection and at such other time as necessary for the city to determine whether a particular establishment may be performing maintenance contrary to the provisions of this chapter. A copy of the maintenance log shall be forwarded quarterly to the City of Monterey Department of Plans and Public Works for review.

20. Q. Can I reduce my cleaning requirements by using bacteria/enzymes?

A. Bacteria/enzymes can be helpful, but do not replace the need to install grease pretreatment equipment and maintain a cleaning schedule for the equipment. Bacteria products must be at least 90% bacteria and not contain more than 10% enzymes or surfactants to be approved for use.

21. Q. What other businesses have to install wastewater pretreatment?

A. Car Wash businesses are required to have a Sand/Oil/Water separator. Photographic developers, Doctors offices and Dental offices are required to have a silver recovery system. Dry cleaners are required to have a solvent recovery system.

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