Fatty Sewers – Tips on Preventing Sewer Overflows

KEEP THE STORM DRAINS CLEAN FOR THOSE DOWNSTREAM

Much like eating greasy foods can clog your arteries, grease in drains can clog your pipes, with potentially costly results.

Fats, oils and greases in the installation's sewers are a major problem. Preventing this problem is easy and is a top priority for the installation community.

How Do Pipes Get Clogged?

Grease is washed down drains in homes and restaurants during food preparation and cleaning. The grease comes from meat fat, lard, cooking oil, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, dairy products, and sauces. When washed down the drain, grease adheres to the sewer pipes in the streets and in your home. Much like eating greasy foods can clog your arteries, grease in drains can clog your pipes, with potentially costly results.

What Happens When Pipes Clog?

Blocked sewer mains can force raw sewage into your home or neighboring homes, damaging the interiors and causing health concerns. Some blockages cause raw sewage to overflow into streams, storm ditches, streets, yards, and other areas. Contact with untreated wastewaters can cause infection and disease. In addition, this kind of incident can damage the environment and subject the installation to legal action and fines. This can also increase DPW maintenance costs - an unnecessary burden on the installation budget.

How the Homeowner Can Help Prevent Sewer Overflows

- Do not put fats and greases down your drains, toilets, or disposals!
- Store waste grease, meat fats, lard, cooking oil, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, dairy products, and fatty sauces in containers for trash disposal.
- Use a sink strainer to prevent food scraps and other items from entering the drain.
- Reduce the use of highly saturated fats (those which are solid at room temperature).

How Restaurant Owners Can Help

- Ensure that all kitchen sinks have grease traps.
- Ensure grease traps are properly sized, installed, and maintained.
- Clean grease traps regularly, in coordination with the installation environmental office.

For further information, contact the Installation's Environmental Branch at 767-2010.

Improving Storm Water Quality