

Monitoring and maintaining your grease interceptor

A grease interceptor (also known as a grease trap) is critical part of your kitchen that prevents used cooking fats, oils and grease (FOG) from entering the wastewater system. Grease interceptors provide business an opportunity to properly dispose of FOG before it can impact their kitchens. Having a grease interceptor is only half the battle, properly monitoring and maintaining the interceptor is just as important as owning one. The City Wastewater Bylaw requires Food Service Establishments to own, maintain and document the cleaning results of their grease interceptor for a two year period.

Grease Interceptor need Monitoring and Maintenance

If FOG bypasses your grease interceptor it can cause a lot of problems for your business: reduced plumbing flow, odours and even a sewer backup. The results can cost your business time, money and customers. To prevent these plumbing problems, determine a cleaning schedule that's right for your kitchen.

How often your interceptor requires cleaning?

Monitor your grease interceptor for one month by inspecting the layer of FOG at the top of the interceptor (FOG depth) two to three times per week. Once the FOG depth is thicker than two inches, the grease interceptor requires cleaning (see below to determine how to measure this layer of FOG). Once you have established a cleaning schedule, by monitoring the FOG depth, you can monitor your interceptor weekly to ensure the frequency of cleaning remains appropriate.

Manually monitor the cleanliness of your grease interceptor (Two inch tip):

1. Remove the lid of your grease interceptor.
2. Using a turkey baster, break through the fat layer at the top of the interceptor in attempts to determine its thickness.
 - a. If the fat layer is thick, and solidified the grease interceptor needs to be cleaned immediately.
 - b. If the fat layer breaks up easily, squeeze the baster bulb and insert the tip roughly 1 inch into liquid. Obtain a sample and see if its contents are unconsolidated FOG or water. Continue by going 2 inches deep with the baster. If the result is unconsolidated FOG and water, continue by going 2½ inches deep. If by the third try you do not obtain a result of just water, your grease interceptor requires cleaning.

The Canadian Standards Association determines cleaning requirements by adding the FOG depth and the solids depth (debris at the bottom of the tank) together. This measurement should not exceed 25 percent of the overall depth of your interceptor. The above rule provides a simple method to determine cleanliness of your grease interceptor.

[See reverse](#)



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Cleaning your Grease Interceptor

To clean your grease interceptor, you or your licensed hauler should follow these steps:

1. Open the grease interceptor and suction off the top layer of grease using a wet-dry vacuum or manually pail it out, placing it in an appropriate storage container for later disposal.
2. Suction out the solids at the bottom of the interceptor, placing it in an appropriate storage container for later disposal.
3. Suction out any water, placing it in an appropriate storage container for later disposal.
4. Scrape and remove the baffles, if possible, and follow the five-side rule: Thoroughly clean all four sides and the bottom of the interceptor using fresh water and a scraping tool. Rinse with clean water and suction out one last time. Place all substances in an appropriate storage container for later disposal.
5. Ensure that the inlet, outlet and air relief ports are clean and clear and that all internal components are working properly.
6. Properly reinstall all seals, replacing any that are brittle or cracked. Securely fasten the cover and fill the grease interceptor with clean water to ensure maximum efficiency.
7. Dispose of all substances by calling a licensed hauler who will dispose of it at a licensed waste disposal facility.
8. Ensure that you and/or hauler are recording all maintenance, cleaning and inspection of your interceptor on the FOG Grease Interceptor Service Record (available on calgary.ca by searching FOG Record or by calling 3-1-1). Make certain that if using a hauler, the hauler records the sludge depth and free water depth during maintenance. As per The City's Wastewater Bylaw 14M2012, all food service establishments must keep service records onsite for a minimum of two years.

Please note: The direct addition of enzymes, chemical and bacteria treatment to an interceptor is prohibited as per The City's Wastewater Bylaw 14M2012. Enzymes, chemical and bacteria treatments only dissolve the grease enough for it to enter the wastewater system, where it re-congeals and hardens leading to clogged pipes and sewer backups.

Frequency of Cleaning

How often you need to clean your interceptor can vary from several times a week to once every few weeks depending on its capacity, as well as the type of food and cooking methods employed by your establishment. You can reduce the frequency of cleanings by removing the top level of grease from your interceptor often, sometimes several times a week if necessary. However, it's important that you continuously monitor your interceptor to ensure it's not reaching capacity. As it nears capacity, FOG will begin to bypass the interceptor, leading to blockages and backups.

You can also reduce the amount of cleanings needed by ensuring your employees are following best management practices in the kitchen to prevent fats, oils and grease from going down the drain:

- Wipe down all cooking equipment before washing
- Scrape dishes before washing
- Recycle used fryer grease for free