Prohibitions on using Chemicals, Enzymes, or Bacteria in Grease Traps and Interceptors

**Chemicals: the use of chemicals to clean grease traps or interceptors is strictly prohibited because:**

- Local sewer use ordinances prohibit the use of chemicals as a method to remove grease from your grease trap or interceptor.
- Cleaners, solvents, caustics, or other chemicals cannot be used to dissolve accumulated grease from your grease trap or grease interceptor. These chemicals cause grease to flow out of your trap or interceptor in violation of local ordinances. The grease may deposit on sewer pipes downstream of your business, obstructing them and contributing to sewer overflows.

**Enzymes: the use of enzymes to clean grease traps or interceptors is strictly prohibited because:**

- Whether produced synthetically or from animals, enzymes cannot be used to dissolve grease from your grease trap or interceptor.
- Enzymes can temporarily alter the chemical form of the grease, allowing it to dissolve into the water. However, the altered grease may reform into solid matter downstream from your business, obstructing sewer pipes.

**Bacteria: the use of bacteria to clean grease traps or interceptors is strictly prohibited because:**

- Bacteria need a reliable environment to grow and are sensitive to changes in temperature, pH, oil and grease loading, water flow changes, etc. It is difficult to maintain the conditions necessary for bacteria to thrive in a kitchen environment. Biological expertise and ongoing sampling are often needed for bacteria to be sustainable.
- Even if bacteria survive and flourish, their effectiveness in removing grease is limited. “Partially eaten” (i.e., not broken down completely) grease may still enter the plumbing and over time reform into solid matter downstream, obstructing the sewer pipes.

*Grease in the system causes problems in sanitary sewers and increases your operating costs.*
In general...

Greasy wastewater may not be discharged to the sanitary sewer system unless it has been treated using a grease trap or interceptor approved by West Valley Sanitation District.

Floating or solid grease matter must be physically removed from your grease removal device by pumping, scraping, scooping, etc.

Maintain your grease trap and interceptor in efficient operating condition by regular removal of accumulated grease.

The minimum cleaning frequency required for grease interceptors installed in food service facilities is once every 90 days. However, more frequent cleaning may be necessary.

The minimum cleaning frequency required for grease traps installed in food service facilities is once every 30 days. However, more frequent cleaning may be necessary.

For more information:
West Valley Sanitation District
100 East Sunnyoaks Avenue
Campbell, CA 95008
Office: (408) 378-2407
Fax: (408) 364-1821
www.westvalleysan.org
Grease Trap Maintenance

What is the Purpose of a Grease Trap?

- A grease trap is designed to separate Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) and solid food waste from your kitchen wastewater.
- Buildup of FOG and solid food waste in your plumbing may cause blockages in either your plumbing or the sanitary sewer lines. This can lead to an overflow into your building, a neighbor’s building, streets, or the environment. It is important to clean your grease trap regularly.

Cleaning Frequency

- Grease traps shall be cleaned at least once every 30 days. More frequent cleaning may be necessary if:
  - Your sinks are draining slowly, possibly due to buildups in the trap.
  - Water levels in the trap or floor drains are high, possibly due to grease-related blockages in your plumbing.
  - The grease trap smells bad because solids are filling the bottom of the trap quickly.
  - Your trap is not sized correctly for your restaurant operations, menu, or number of meals served.

Twenty-Five Percent Rule

- Clean the trap when it is twenty-five percent (25%) full of FOG and solid food waste or within 30 days of the last pumping, whichever comes first.

Common Problems Leading to Grease Trap Repair or Replacement

- Grease trap installed backwards, without flow controls, or otherwise in violation of plumbing codes or manufacturer specifications.
- Missing or damaged parts, such as the removable baffle plates.
- Leaks due to rust holes or punctures in the walls or floors.
- Illegal connection to the dishwasher or garbage grinder to the grease trap.

Grease Trap

*Grease in the system causes problems in sanitary sewers and increases your operating costs.*
**Kitchen Best Management Practices (BMPs)**

Scraping grease and food waste to the garbage before washing dishes will minimize the amount of grease and solids going into the grease trap and will often improve trap performance.

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**Tips on Routine Grease Trap Maintenance**

To ensure proper maintenance, we recommend using a professional grease hauling company.

Cleaning consists of emptying the entire trap, including FOG, wastewater, and solid food waste; making sure the removable baffle plates and parts are thoroughly cleaned and replaced properly after each cleaning.

Keep a maintenance log sheet posted near the grease trap if you self-clean the trap.

Melt ice in the sink plumbed to the grease trap an hour or two before cleaning. This helps cool and harden the grease in the trap, making cleaning easier and reducing odors.

Have an extra gasket available for your grease trap lid and use allen screws (which resist stripping) to secure the lid.

Run your hood fans during cleaning to reduce odors.

Call a plumber to snake or hydro-flush your sewer lateral (plumbing) pipes to the street periodically to remove any blockages.

If you choose to self-clean your grease trap, please see the "How to Clean Your Grease Trap" poster for guidance.

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*West Valley Sanitation District*  
Serving the cities of Campbell, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, much of Saratoga, and unincorporated areas of the county within the district boundary.
Grease Interceptor Maintenance

What is the Purpose of a Grease Interceptor?
- A grease interceptor is designed to separate Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) and solid food waste from your kitchen wastewater.
- Buildup of FOG and solid food waste in your plumbing may cause blockages in either your plumbing or the sanitary sewer lines. This can lead to a sanitary sewer overflow into your building, a neighbor's building, streets, or the environment. It is important to clean your grease interceptor regularly.

Cleaning Frequency
- Grease interceptors shall be cleaned at least once every 90 days. More frequent cleaning may be necessary to keep your interceptor operating properly.

Twenty-Five Percent Rule
- Pump your interceptor when the final chamber is twenty-five percent (25%) full of FOG and solid food waste or within 90 days of the last pumping, whichever comes first.

Standards for Evaluating Grease Interceptors
- Manhole and sample box lids should be easily removable for cleaning and inspections.
- The baffle wall and all three standpipes must be in place and unbroken, above and below the water and grease levels.
- If any standpipes are under water or grease, they must be raised above the grease level. High water or grease level could result from a blockage in the downstream pipes.
- Downstream blockages could indicate inadequate interceptor cleaning frequency.

Grease in the system causes problems in sanitary sewers and increases your operating costs.
Kitchen Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Grease and solid food waste can build up inside the interceptor and may cause the interceptor to operate less efficiently.

Scraping grease and food waste to the garbage before washing dishes will minimize the amount of grease and solids going into the grease interceptor and will improve interceptor performance.

Tips on Routine Grease Interceptor Maintenance

The pumping service should wash and scrape all sides, standpipes, and surfaces inside the interceptor and completely pump out all contents.

The pumping service shall not decant (return) wastewater back into the interceptor; the grease concentration in interceptor wastewater is very high.

Make sure your pumping service cleans the sample box and effluent standpipe of the interceptor. You may need to pump more often if you see fresh grease being discharged into your sample box. Require the pumping service to show the disposal destination for your waste on the pumping invoice. Your business may be liable for any illegal dumping or discharge of waste from your facility.

Do visual inspections after pumping services are performed or when plumbers snake or hydro-jet plumbing or laterals to make sure the interceptor standpipes are not damaged.

Keep grease interceptor pumping records on site for a minimum of three years. Refer to the Grease Control Device Maintenance Recordkeeping sheet for more information.

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Discharging used cooking or deep fryer oil, rotisserie fat, or solid food waste into kitchen sinks, mop sinks, and floor drains in your kitchen that are connected to the sanitary sewer system is a violation of your local sewer use ordinances.
Grease Control Device
Maintenance Recordkeeping

All food service establishments are required to keep maintenance records for their grease traps, interceptors, and mechanical grease control devices for a minimum of three years. Records must be readily available for review by Compliance Inspectors.

Failure to maintain records on site for a minimum of three years is a violation of the West Valley Sanitation District sewer ordinance and may result in fines.

**Device: Grease Interceptor**
**Cleaning Method: Professional Pumping Company Only**
Establish and maintain a log to track maintenance and hold receipts from your professional pumping company. If you have more than one grease interceptor, establish and maintain a separate log for each one.

**Receipts must include the following information:**
- Pumping company name, address, and phone number.
- Truck IKG number.
- Date and time of pumping service.
- Name and address of your business.
- Location of each grease control device.
- Size and type of your grease control device.
- Approximate quantity of grease and solid food waste recorded in gallons, inches, or percentages.
- Pumping frequency.
- Details on any structural, maintenance, or repair issues.
- Grease disposal location.

**Device: Grease Trap**
**Cleaning Method: Professional Pumping Company or Self-Cleaning**
Establish and maintain a log to track maintenance and hold receipts from your professional pumping company if you use one. If you have more than one grease trap, establish and maintain a separate log for each one.

**Logs must include the following information:**
- Date of cleaning.
- Name of person who cleaned the trap.
- Approximate quantity of grease and solid food waste recorded in gallons, inches, or percentages.
- Location of each grease control device.
- Waste removal and disposal method.
- Grease disposal location.
- Any other relevant notes.
- Keep receipts with your self-cleaning log sheets if you use a professional cleaning service.

Grease in the system causes problems in sanitary sewers and increases your operating costs.
### Example of a Recordkeeping Log for a Grease Control Device

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Cleaning</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Waste Volume Observed/Removed</th>
<th>Maintenance Done</th>
<th>Disposal Method</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07-07-11</td>
<td>John Smith</td>
<td>3-4 gallons FOG &amp; solids removed</td>
<td>Trap emptied, cleaned</td>
<td>Solids dried, double-bagged, put in dumpster.</td>
<td>Patched hole in baffle wall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
You must keep a separate log for each grease control device.

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Whether you contract a professional pumping service, perform the cleaning yourself, or do both, you are responsible for keeping and maintaining maintenance records.
## Grease Control Device Maintenance Recordkeeping Log

**Business:** ___________________________

**Grease Control Device Size:** ___________________________

**Location of Grease Control Device:** ___________________________

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date of Cleaning</th>
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If you have any questions, please call (408) 378-2407 to speak with a Compliance Inspector. 
This and other outreach materials are available at www.westvalleysan.org
# Grease Control Device Maintenance Recordkeeping Log

**Business:** ____________________  **Grease Control Device Size:** ____________________  **Location of Grease Control Device:** ____________________

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</table>
**HOW TO CLEAN YOUR GREASE TRAP**

Keep grease out of the sanitary sewer by following these simple steps:

1. **Scoop Top Grease**
   - Let grease trap cool down. Scoop out oil and grease. Place waste in a plastic bag.

2. **Remove Water**
   - Scoop out water. Leave solids and sludge behind. Pour water into a sanitary sewer (indoor) drain.

3. **Remove Solids and Sludge**
   - Scrape waste from all sides and bottom of grease trap. Place in a plastic bag.

4. **Clean All Parts**
   - Check and clean all removable parts, baffles, and/or screens. Place waste in a plastic bag.

5. **Make Waste Solid**
   - Pour cat litter into bag(s) of waste and mix until dry. Double-bag the waste.

6. **Dispose**
   - Securely tie up bags of waste. Dispose in a trash can or dumpster. Close lid over trash.

7. **Reassemble and Record**
   - Reassemble trap. Tighten lid. Record cleaning on maintenance log sheet.

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**COMPLIANCE WARNING:** You are required by your sewer use ordinance to keep the grease trap in efficient operating condition. Failure to do so can result in fines or other penalties.

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