

Environmental Services Department

Policy Clarification Sheet

Fats, Oils, and Grease Program (FOG)

Grease Interceptor Sizing and Installation Policy



Policy Overview

Purpose: The Grease Interceptor Sizing and Installation Policy provides guidelines for selecting and maintaining grease interceptors in facilities that may discharge fats, oils, and grease (FOG) into the wastewater system, or otherwise interfere with the operation of the municipal sewer system in violation of TMC 12.08C.500. These facilities include restaurants, cafes, catering facilities, commissaries, hotels, cafeterias, convenience stores, full-service grocery stores, schools, hospitals, and food manufacturing plants. The goal is to prevent FOG from obstructing the sewer system.

Key Policy Definitions:

- **Hydromechanical Grease Interceptors (HGIs):** Located inside or outside facilities, designed to slow water flow to trap FOG. Each fixture must have a flow restrictor.
- **Gravity Grease Interceptors (GGIs):** Typically installed outside the facility and hold at least 500 gallons of wastewater. GGIs are typically suitable for larger installations.
- **Drainage Fixture Unit (DFU):** A measure used to calculate the plumbing load from different fixtures.

Key Policy Requirements

1. Maintenance

Grease interceptors must be cleaned when 25% of their chamber is filled with FOG and solids or when grease is seen discharging through the outlet. Regular maintenance ensures proper operation.

2. Sizing and Installation

- **Smaller Facilities:** (40 seats or fewer without the ability to serve more than 40 meals per peak hour): Can use an HGI, sized based on the number of DFUs connected to it. Dishwashers can discharge to an HGI if approved by the City, but food waste disposals (garbage disposals) cannot.
- **Larger Facilities:** (More than 40 seats or the ability to serve more than 40 meals per peak hour): Require a GGI, with size determined by the total DFUs of FOG-producing fixtures. All sinks, dishwashers, and drains that produce FOG must discharge to the GGI. If food waste disposals are used, the size of the GGI must be increased.
- **Facilities with Space Limitations:** If a GGI cannot be installed due to physical space limitations, an exception may be requested from the City.

3. Determining Proper Size

1. Identify FOG-producing fixtures (example: 3-compartment sinks, dishwashers, floor drains).
2. Assign DFU values to each fixture (see table below for common DFUs).
3. Calculate the total DFUs and choose an interceptor size based on the total DFU count.

See [Page 3 of the Grease Interceptor Sizing and Installation Policy](#) document for examples of common DFU Values, sizing charts, and other examples.

4. Exception Process

Facilities unable to comply with the standard GGI installation requirements can apply for an exception by submitting a written request to the Environmental Services Director. The request must include an engineer's report and explain why the exception is needed (example: lack of space). Exceptions are only granted if they are equally protective of the sewer system and environment. [View Page 6 of the Grease Interceptor Sizing and Installation Policy](#) for full details on how to apply for an exception.

5. Important Installation Reminders

- Installation plans must be approved by the City of Tacoma before construction begins.
- Grease interceptors must be watertight and accessible for regular cleaning.
- For larger restaurants, the 3-compartment sinks must be directly connected to the sewer system via a grease interceptor. In smaller establishments, the sinks may discharge indirectly into an HGI.
- Direct sewer connections are required for certain sinks (example: 3-compartment sinks and floor drains) to prevent sewer backflow.

Contact Information

For more information or to request an exception, contact:

City of Tacoma Environmental Services Department

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