

Grease and Your Sewer System

Did you know that grease from cooking is one of the major causes of residential sewer main clogs resulting in sewer Backup's?

Cooking oil and grease are wastes that the city's sewer system cannot handle and should not be discarded down the drain. Grease, fat and oil can clog sewer lines, causing sewage back-ups and flooding. Sewage back-ups can damage personal and public property. By following a few simple steps, you can help prevent costly sewer spills in the future.

- Small amounts of cooking oil (this includes salad oil, frying oil and bacon fat) should be poured into an old milk carton, frozen juice container, cans or other non-recyclable package, and disposed of in the garbage.
- Dishes and pots that are coated with greasy leftovers should be wiped clean with a paper towel prior to washing or placing in the dishwasher.
- Instead of placing fat trimmings from meat down the garbage disposal, place them in a plastic bag and discard in the garbage can.

DO NOT dump cooking oil, poultry fat and grease into the kitchen sink or the toilet bowl

DO place cooled cooking oil, poultry and meat fats in sealed containers and discard with your regular garbage

Sewer Stoppages

When a stoppage occurs, contact the Utilities Services Department at 927-8400, Mon-Fri 8:30 AM - 5PM. The City will assess the stoppage to determine if the blockage is on the City's side of the sewer line or the homeowner's side of the sewer line. The City will clear blockages that occur in the main sewer line. Homeowners are responsible for blockages that occur in the sewer lateral, located between main sewer line and the dwelling.



Eliminating Fats, Oils and Grease from our Sewers

**Just as grease clogs your arteries,
it also clogs the local sewer lines**

Where does grease come from?

Most of us know grease as a byproduct of cooking. Grease is found in such things as:

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|---------------|----------------------|----------------|
| • Meat fats | Lard | Cooking oil |
| • Shortening | Butter and margarine | Food scraps |
| • Baked goods | Sauces | Dairy products |

Too often, grease is washed into the plumbing system, usually through the kitchen sink. Grease sticks to the inside of sewer pipes (both on your property and in the streets). Over time, the grease can build and block the entire pipe.

Commercial additives, including detergents that claim to dissolve grease, may pass grease down the line and cause problems in other areas.



The results of a grease-blocked sewer pipe can be:

- Raw sewage overflowing in your home or your neighbor's home
- An expensive and unpleasant cleanup that often must be paid for by you, the homeowner (the average cleanup cost is about \$3,000; this does not include replacing carpets and repairing walls)
- Potential contact with disease-causing organisms
- An increase in operation and maintenance costs by the local sewer department, which causes higher sewer bills for customers.

Please do your part to keep fats, oils and greases out of the sewer

**How To Keep
COOKING
GREASE
Out of the Drain**

**You Can Help
Prevent
Sewer Spills**

Cooking Grease

is one of the primary causes of residential pipeline and City sewer main clogs resulting in sewer spills throughout the Metropolitan Wastewater Sewerage area. The spilled sewage eventually reaches San Diego's bays, rivers, and beaches, causing unsafe conditions and temporary closures.

All cooking oils disposed of improperly can cause problems in the sewer system. These include:

- ✓ frying oil
- ✓ salad oil
- ✓ meat drippings
- ✓ bacon fat
- ✓ greasy leftovers



Important Facts

- Cooking grease coats pipelines similar to the way that fatty foods clog human arteries. The grease clings to the inside of the pipelines, eventually causing complete blockage.
- Costly home plumbing bills are often the result of grease-clogged pipelines. Residential pipelines clog easily since they are only 2" - 4" in diameter.
- Many people are unaware that pouring hot water and detergent down the drain only breaks up grease temporarily. Grease should NEVER be poured down the drain. If small amounts of grease accidentally get into your drain, flush immediately with COLD water.
- Flushing grease down the toilet also causes sewer backups.

By following a few simple steps, you can help prevent costly sewer spills in the future.

Step 1

All cooking oil should be poured into an old milk carton, frozen juice container, or other non-recyclable package, and disposed of in the garbage.



Step 2

Dishes and pots that are coated with greasy leftovers, should be wiped clean with a disposable towel prior to washing or placement in dishwashers.

Step 3

Instead of placing fat trimmings from meat in the garbage disposal, put them in a trash can. ALWAYS put cooking grease containers and greasy towels in a plastic bag before disposing of them in your trash bag. NEVER dispose of cooking grease directly into your automated trash container.

Report Spills!

If you see or smell something you think might be a sewer spill, report it immediately by calling (619) 515-3525. Be prepared to describe the location and the nature of the problem.

Other Causes...

- The continual flow of nutrient-filled water found in pipelines attracts tree roots through pipe joints and manholes. The roots eventually grow, causing separation of the pipeline joints or blockages in the pipe. Always avoid planting trees and shrubs near residential and City sewer pipelines.
- Rocks, debris, power outages, vandalism, rain and construction are also contributing factors to sewer spills.

About MWW

The Metropolitan Wastewater Department (MWW) processes approximately 180 million gallons per day generated by 2 million people within 16 cities and districts that comprise the Metropolitan Sewerage System.

For general information, please call (619) 232-6484.



City of San Diego
Metropolitan Wastewater Dept.
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San Diego, CA 92123
www.sandiego.gov

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Sewer Maintenance on Main Wastewater Lines

The City of Benton Harbor primary responsibility for the sewer system is to maintain unobstructed wastewater flow in the collection system. To accomplish this, the City routinely cleans sewer lines and performs preventive maintenance and repairs. If you experience a sewer system backup or sewer manhole overflowing, please notify the City of Benton Harbor Utilities Services Department at 927-8471 as soon as possible.

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