



KEEP **GREASE** OUT OF THE SYSTEM

# 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

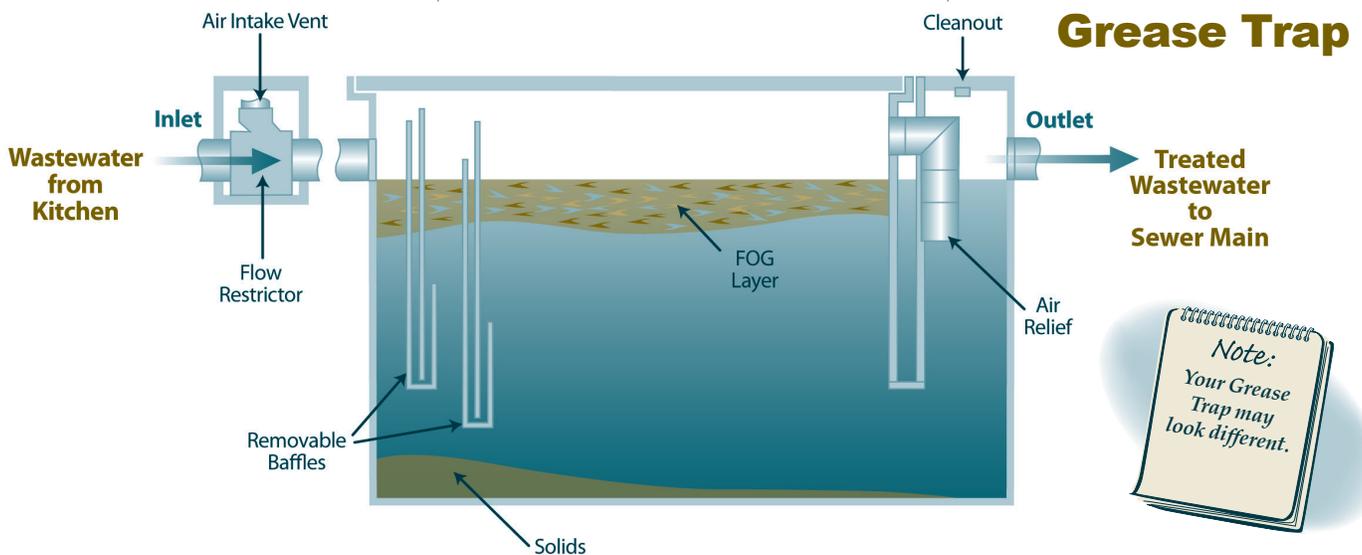
- Grease traps shall be cleaned **at least once every 30 days**. More frequent cleaning may be necessary if:
  - Your sinks are draining slowly, possibly due to buildups in the trap.
  - Water levels in the trap or floor drains are high, possibly due to grease-related blockages in your plumbing.
  - 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 in the system causes problems in storm drains and sanitary sewers — and increases your operating costs.**

**Failure to maintain records on site for a minimum of three years is a violation of your local sewer ordinance and may result in fines. See the "Grease Control Device Maintenance Recordkeeping" factsheet for more information.**



*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.*



*Discharging anything, including oil, grease waste, wash water, or rinse water to the **storm drain system** is a violation of the local sewer use ordinance.*

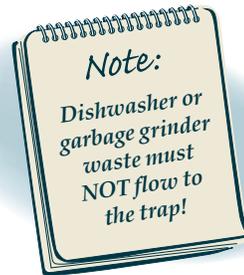
**For more information:**

City of Santa Clara  
Water and Sewer Utilities  
1500 Warburton Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95050  
408.615.2000

[www.santaclaraca.gov](http://www.santaclaraca.gov)

**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.



**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.

If you have any questions, please call **408.615.2000** to speak with a Code Enforcement Technician. This and other outreach materials are available at [www.santaclaraca.gov](http://www.santaclaraca.gov)



San José-Santa Clara  
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Serving the cities of San José, Santa Clara, and Milpitas, Cupertino Sanitary District, West Valley Sanitation District (including the cities of Campbell, Monte Sereno, Saratoga and the Town of Los Gatos), County Sanitation District No. 2-3, and Burbank Sanitary District.



**City of  
Santa Clara**