



KEEP **GREASE** OUT OF THE SYSTEM

# 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.



*Per the sewer use ordinance:*

***“No person shall discharge...any substance of any kind whatsoever tending to obstruct or injure the sanitary sewer system, or to cause a nuisance or hazard, or which will in any manner interfere with the proper operation or maintenance of the sanitary sewer system.”***

## **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 the Environmental Services Department.
- 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:**

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)**

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

SAN JOSE/  
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WATER POLLUTION  
CONTROL PLANT

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



**City of  
Santa Clara**