

Questions from the Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) Workshop
November 6, 2008
City of San José, City Hall

- 1. Are you looking at Grease Interceptor design requirements? Improving the inspection capabilities so the condition can be seen from the surface? Opening a hatch can be difficult.**

We are considering more uniform design specifications, for future installations. We will review the Uniform Plumbing Code, and determine revisions as needed.

The City *prefers* a 3-manhole Grease Interceptor with a sample port, and clean outs before and after the Grease Interceptor. The City *prefers* that the inlet tee, outlet tee, and the cross-over tee are visible from the respective manhole.

- 2. Who will be doing the inspections in the tributary cities, like Santa Clara?**

The San Jose inspectors will be conducting inspections in the tributary cities on behalf of our treatment plant, the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant. We are coordinating closely with the agencies and cities within our tributary area so that the process will be transparent. We have been conducting industrial inspections in these cities for the past several years.

- 3. You mentioned the responsibilities of Property Managers. Generally speaking, each tenant has a Grease Control Device. What is the process for holding the tenant responsible? When would the Property Manager be subject to enforcement proceedings?**

The lease agreement usually specifies this responsibility. If the tenant is paying for the maintenance of the grease control device then they are the responsible party. If the property manager is paying for the maintenance of the grease control device then they are responsible for it and subject to enforcement.

- 4. Is a fee structure or required certification program being considered?**

No separate fee structure is being planned at this time. The program is currently funded by "Sewer Use Fees". There is no certification program being considered.

- 5. How often are inspections done?**

Inspections are done every one to three years based on violations or complaints.

- 6. Do these changes bring San Jose and the tributary cities in alignment with other cities and jurisdictions in California, or is this a more focused effort here?**

Our program is designed to bring us into alignment with other jurisdictions in the state, and the nation. We are following State and Federal requirements.

We are working with groups like the California Restaurant Association, CalFOG, and California Water Environment Association to ensure our alignment with statewide norms.

7. Your presentation notes decommissioning requirements. Who is responsible for decommissioning a Grease Control Device? Are Property Managers expected to do this if a restaurant in their shopping center closes? How is this determination done?

You need to work with your City Plumbing department to determine the decommissioning requirements for an interceptor. The decommissioning requirements may depend on future potential uses of the property. Property managers may consider writing closure conditions into their leases.

8. Regarding school districts, how do the inspectors coordinate with a school districts' maintenance department? When inspectors come to the individual sites, they are not necessarily contacting the right people.

Inspectors do go to the specific sites for the inspections. We will continue to coordinate with the representatives at each site and with the school districts' offices to identify appropriate contact people.

9. Are you using the UPC criteria for designing and sizing traps and interceptors, and where may we find it? And are you changing the sizing criteria?

We use our own sizing criteria, and it is based on the Uniform Plumbing Code. Our Restaurant Wastewater Discharge Questionnaire indicates some of the items that we use to evaluate, and size a Grease Trap, or Grease Interceptor.

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/water-pollution-prevention/com-plancheck.htm>

And we are not currently anticipating changing the sizing criteria.

10. Regarding frequency requirements: How is this determined? Do different inspectors use different requirements? Do the inspectors coordinate with one another so they can be consistent? In other words, how do we change our requirement so we pump once a year instead of every three months?

The City's requirement for Grease Interceptors, the large underground Grease Control Devices, is that they must be pumped every three months. All Inspectors use this requirement. If you desire an alternate frequency, then you must submit a letter describing the situation, and provide the reasons you think you can pump less often. We can investigate the specific case, and may determine that a variance allowing less frequent pumping is acceptable. Keep in mind that any waiver allowing less frequent pumping can be rescinded if the situation changes.

11. What information do we need to bring if we are getting our grease control device sized?

We need to know what your plumbing fixtures are. For example, how many sinks, floor sinks, wok ranges, mop sinks, three compartment sinks, and whether or not you will have a dishwasher. We also need to know what the seating capacity will be, and the kind of food preparation you will be doing at the site.

We have a Plan Check form available on line:

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/water-pollution-prevention/com-plancheck.htm>

12. Explain yellow, brown, and black grease.

Yellow grease comes from used cooking oil, usually from deep fryers. It is most commonly recycled in a Tallow Bin.

Brown grease comes from the Grease Control Device: Grease Trap, or the Grease Interceptor. It may be recycled in a "Brown Grease" drum.

Black grease is grease that has come into contact with sanitary sewage.

13. Can you coordinate with the County Health Program? It would be better if we did not have to deal with so many different kinds of inspectors.

County Health Inspectors focus on the preparation of food and food safety. Our inspectors focus on sanitary sewer issues. Each inspection group has their own areas of expertise. We do work closely with the Health Department on mutual issues.

14. Can we contact you to determine if a particular property has a Grease Control Device?

Yes. Our database has some information about devices installed at some addresses. We can also have an inspector come out and look at a property with you to identify an existing grease control device.

15. Will you be providing a draft of the proposed municipal code changes and reviewing input?

We will coordinate with the California Restaurant Association to disseminate our proposed municipal code, and ask you to contact us directly if you would like to participate in a focus group. Please submit your e-mail request to Mr. Joe Denk, joe.denk@sanjoseca.gov. Please insert "Focus Group" into the subject line.