Fats, oils, and greases (FOG) from food service facilities is a very common issue that can significantly increase operational costs of a sewer system as well as affecting the ability of a POTW to maintain compliance with their wastewater treatment permit. This fact sheet is provided as one of a series, which can help small communities and the businesses located in them to reduce the impact of wastewater pollutants on the local POTW.

**Preventing the Impact of Fats, Oil and Grease**

Fats, oil and grease come from many sources in the food service industry and it usually causes problems in the sewer lines and interceptors first. It readily collects and solidifies and can completely plug the sewer lines. The cost and man hours expended to clean sewer lines and remove FOG can have a very significant impact on the local Department of Public Works operating budget. Depending upon the POTW treatment technology, flows and other factors, the treatment process itself can be disrupted from FOG.

There is likely to be either sewer line related problems or treatment problems without an effective ordinance. The Town of Cary, North Carolina, oil and grease ordinance is a good example that can be followed [http://www.p2pays.org/ref/13/12265.htm](http://www.p2pays.org/ref/13/12265.htm). Most, if not all state regulatory agencies are also likely to have other effective examples to follow.

**Pollution Prevention for Food Service Businesses**

Perhaps the first step is for the food service businesses to recognize that responsible management of FOG is critical. Using water bills or other mailings to sewer users is an effective method of making them aware of the problem as well as explaining their responsibilities. It is important for the business to understand that sewer line blockages and other costs related to sewer maintenance can result in increased sewer use fees and the costs could be directly passed on to the specific business causing the problem. Properly designed and serviced grease traps and other collection devices, as well as best management practices, which keep FOG out of the sewer are essential business practices.

There are many reference documents that can be used for FOG management at food service facilities. Perhaps one of the most comprehensive collections of information is located at “The Green Plan for the Food Service Industry” web site produced by North Carolina Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance. The “Green Plan” web page is at [http://www.p2pays.org/food/main/oil.htm](http://www.p2pays.org/food/main/oil.htm) and includes many tools including an excellent checklist to help implement a FOG program. [http://www.p2pays.org/food/food%20Service%20Assessment%20Checklist.pdf](http://www.p2pays.org/food/food%20Service%20Assessment%20Checklist.pdf)

Recycling Fats, Oils and Grease

The high cost of fuel today actually makes used cooking oils and greases a desirable commodity for some companies that are able process oils and grease into fuels. Two examples of Wisconsin companies capitalizing on this commodity are located in Blair, Wisconsin at Blue Honey Bio Fuels [http://bluehoneybiofuels.com](http://bluehoneybiofuels.com) and in De Forest, Wisconsin through Sanimax, [http://www.sanimax.com/](http://www.sanimax.com/). Your state TAP can help you find other fuel blending vendors, rendering companies or others in your area who may be interested in recycling the used oils and greases from food service facilities.

Technical Assistance Programs (TAP) Resources

Using the resources listed above and the technical assistance available from state TAP’s is an inexpensive way to help food service facilities find the best methods to successfully manage FOG. All 50 states have a TAP that provides some technical assistance and most can be reached via a simple Internet search.

*The University of Wisconsin-Extension-Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC)* is the state TAP for Wisconsin. SHWEC provides environmental information and assistance that can reduce or eliminate wastes, wastewater and air emissions through on-site visits and direct technical assistance. Visit [www.uwex.edu/shwec](http://www.uwex.edu/shwec) to learn more about SHWEC or to contact a specialist.

*The Great Lakes Regional Pollution Prevention Roundtable (GLRPPR)* provides contacts to other Great Lake States TAP’s and also provides access to additional national resources through the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable at [http://www.p2.org/](http://www.p2.org/). The GLRPPR is an extensive resource for publications and information through their web site at [http://www.glrppr.org/](http://www.glrppr.org/) and provides direct access to Food Service, Hospitality and the Publicly Owned Treatment Works “Topic Hubs” through the GLRPPR web site.

Wastewater Regulation

Always check with your local POTW or municipal web site for an ordinance covering fats, oil and grease. In Wisconsin and most states wastewater regulations are readily available on the Internet. All Wisconsin statutes and administrative codes are available at Wisconsin Statutes [http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/stats.html](http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/stats.html) Wisconsin Administrative Codes [http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code.htm](http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code.htm)

*Even when there is no local ordinance in place,* all commercial facilities in Wisconsin are required to comply with NR 211.10 which lists prohibited discharges.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources portal to wastewater regulation is at: [http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/) and a condensed list of Wisconsin NR Chapters for wastewater is located at: [http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/Regulations.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/Regulations.html)

Other resources of information helpful to the Food Service Industry

US Occupational Health and Safety web site at [http://www.osha.gov/](http://www.osha.gov/) has many useful inspection tools and information. OSHA also provides access to information on over 800 chemicals commonly found in the workplace in the database located at [OSHA Occupational Chemical Database](http://www.osha.gov/chemicals/databases/). The web site [Young Worker Safety in Restaurants](http://www.osha.gov/young-worker-safety/) describes common hazards and potential safety solutions for teen workers and employers in the restaurant industry.


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