

TOWN OF SEABROOK, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
Sewer Department, Industrial Pretreatment Program

**SUBJECT: Answers to Common Questions About Waste from Grease Interceptors and Grease Traps**

**Purpose**

This publication is intended for generators of wastewater that contains fats, oil and grease from the manufacture, preparation and/or sale of food products. If you generate this type of wastewater, it is important for you to know and comply with existing regulations because you are responsible for managing your waste grease - from the time it is generated to the time of final disposal.

**Grease Interceptors & Grease Traps**

**What is the difference between a grease “trap” and a grease “interceptor”?**

The Town of Seabrook refers to a hydromechanical device with a maximum rated flow of 50 gallons per minute or less as a “Grease Trap”. Grease traps are installed indoors, on the floor, near to or directly under the sinks they drain.

A device that relies solely on gravity and has a maximum rated flow of greater than 50 gallons per minute is referred to as a “Grease Interceptor”. Grease interceptors are installed underground, outside of the building and have total capacities of 750 gallons or more.

**Am I required to have a grease trap or grease interceptor?**

A grease trap or grease interceptor is required for any facility, including those occupied by commercial, non-profit, municipal, State and federal entities, whose normal activity is determined to be a source of cooking or food-related fat, grease or oil - such as restaurants, cafeterias, and food processing plants - and that discharges wastewater to the municipal sanitary sewer. The Town’s Municipal Sewer System Ordinance prohibits the discharge of any wastewater having an oil & grease concentration that exceeds 100 parts per million as this can contribute to the blockage of sewer lines.

Where feasible, the Town of Seabrook requires all food service establishments to maintain a properly sized, in-ground, gravity grease interceptor. For certain facilities, however, existing grease traps are given limited “grandfather” status while, in other rare instances, space limitations or other unique circumstances make a grease trap the only viable solution for managing oil and grease in a building’s wastewater discharge.

**Who regulates my grease trap or interceptor?**

Grease traps and grease interceptors are regulated by the Town of Seabrook through the Sewer Department’s Industrial Wastewater Pretreatment Program. Each trap and interceptor must be registered with the Town, generally at the time

a wastewater discharge permit is issued. The State of New Hampshire regulates the pumping (evacuation), transportation, and disposal of grease interceptor waste.

**What standards does my grease trap or grease interceptor have to meet?**

Grease traps must meet specific standards for design, sizing and installation. These include the International Plumbing Code, PDI G-101, ASME A112.14.3 and, where applicable, ASME A112.14.3. Information about these standards is available from the Industrial Wastewater Pretreatment Program Office.

Grease interceptors should be designed by a professional engineer (P.E.) licensed by the State of New Hampshire. Standard design information is available from the Industrial Pretreatment Program Office for reference. Both the device itself and its installation must be approved by the Seabrook Sewer Superintendent. Grease interceptors must have either two or three chambers, a downstream sampling manhole, and a rated retention time of at least 24 minutes at maximum flow. They must also be configured so as to allow thorough cleaning and inspection without the need for confined space entry.

Both grease traps and grease interceptors must be installed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

**Who can pump my grease interceptor?**

Although indoor grease traps are commonly cleaned by the user, only a commercial transporter who is approved by the Town of Seabrook may pump and transport waste from outdoor grease interceptors. You may call the Seabrook Industrial Wastewater Pretreatment Program Office for a list of approved commercial transporters.

**May I dispose of the waste from my own grease trap or interceptor?**

Waste grease and settled solids taken from a grease trap may be placed into a watertight container and discarded as solid waste (e.g., dumpster). On the other hand, only an approved commercial transporter may remove and haul waste from a grease interceptor. The transportation of "yellow grease" from fryers that will be taken to a renderer must be done in compliance with health department requirements.

**What does it cost to have my grease interceptor pumped?**

Costs vary, depending on such factors as choice of transporter, distance to the disposal site, frequency of pumping, volume pumped, disposal site charges, and testing requirements. Keep in mind that the Town of Seabrook has no control over prices. They are set by the transporter.

**How often should I have my grease trap or interceptor cleaned?**

Frequency of cleaning depends on the size of the device and the amount of waste you generate. The Town of Seabrook enforces "the 25% rule" for both

grease traps and grease interceptors. This means that the Town considers an interceptor or trap to be “full” when the sum of the maximum depth of the settled solids on the bottom PLUS the maximum thickness of the floatable grease on top is equal to 25% of the total wetted depth of the device.

Both grease traps and grease interceptors must be cleaned before they exceed the 25% rule; however, the minimum allowable cleaning frequency for grease traps is once a month. The minimum allowable cleaning frequency for a specific grease interceptor is established by the Sewer Superintendent, but cannot be less than once every six months.

### **What happens if my waste is disposed of improperly?**

The following problems can be created:

- costly clogged sewer lines and dangerous sanitary sewer overflows;
- foul (potential nuisance) odors;
- breeding grounds for flies and vermin;
- salmonella and botulism poisoning;
- exposure to infectious diseases for those who come in contact with these wastes;
- soil contamination;
- water contamination from seepage into well fields, or when waste is dumped into creeks and other bodies of water; and
- loss of aquatic life.

Remember, as the generator **you are ultimately liable for any improper disposal of grease interceptor or grease trap waste.**

Please call or write to the Seabrook Sewer Department Industrial Pretreatment Program Office if you have any questions regarding the control of fats, oil and grease within the Seabrook municipal sanitary sewer system.

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