



Lanes Group plc Best Practice Series

**Disposal of fat, oil and grease:
a guide for the food industry**



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Fat, oil and grease is known as FOG in the drainage industry.

Putting FOG down your drains can have serious consequences. It can damage your drains, cause costly blockages, and leave you open to prosecution for environmental pollution. Not to mention the detrimental effect on your business, with downtime whilst you sort the problem out and potentially lose customers in the process.

According to Water UK, around 80% of the 360,000 sewer blockages in the UK each year are the result of FOG, wipes, sanitary waste and other unflushable items being disposed of into the wastewater network.

This costs the water companies £88 million a year, with further costs for cleaning up after flooding.

Unsurprisingly, the water companies want to tackle this problem head on. Many have increased their enforcement actions and set up specialist teams to investigate and inspect premises. And they're focusing on food service establishments (FSEs) because of the disproportionate number of blockages which occur where there are a lot of restaurants and takeaways.

You and your staff need to know why FOG is a problem for your food business, how to dispose of FOG responsibly and to understand the legal consequences of not doing so.

As the UK's largest independent drainage specialist, we're here to help, starting with this guide.



Why is FOG a problem?

There are no two ways about it:

fat, oil and grease will become solid in your drains and block your pipes. In extreme cases, it may form what's known as a 'fatberg'. You may have seen horror stories in the press about fatbergs the size of London buses or jumbo jets.

Trust us, they're all true, and we should know: we're the ones who have to get them out of the sewers.

FOG is something of a modern-day problem, made worse by the fact that many sewers were built for a Victorian lifestyle, not our 21st century food outlets and throwaway culture.



A blocked drain can be costly. But there are other consequences, like odours, flooding, pollution, damage to pumping station machinery and a strong chance of rat infestation. Yes, really. It seems that the smell of used cooking oil acts as an aphrodisiac on the sex hormone in rats. Put it down your drains and your premises could be overrun with vermin in no time: a big taboo for any food business.

Blocking the sewers as a result of FOG build up can easily cause a pollution incident — either on your own premises, nearby property or the surrounding area. You could be prosecuted under a variety of legislation, by a number of agencies. They may even attempt to recover costs from you.

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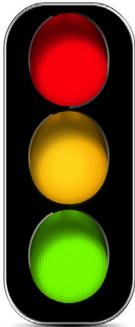
Review your FOG policy

So what should you be doing to avoid causing FOG issues for your business, your neighbours, and the environment?

It's simple: never put fat, oil or grease (or food waste) down your drains. But there are other steps you can take too.

Train people

Make sure all your staff know that the consequences of ignoring the rules can be costly for your business, and for your reputation. That means their jobs could be at stake. Make sure they follow our traffic light system:



Stop: Before you put dirty pots, plates and utensils in to wash

Get ready: Scrape food residue into the waste bin, and dry wipe surfaces with disposable kitchen towel

Go: Ok, now you can put the items in the dishwasher or the sink

Changing poor kitchen practices is a good start. But grease management equipment is available too. Here is an overview, with the pros and cons.

Take the strain

Always use a strainer in your sink's plughole to catch food debris, and empty it regularly into the waste bin. Of course this won't stop liquid fats.

Macerators (food waste disposal units)

The water industry opposes the use of macerators because food waste contributes to sewer blockages. In Scotland macerators have been banned since 1 January 2016.

Remember: any grease management system must be emptied, cleaned and maintained regularly to be effective.





Good bacteria

Enzyme dosing systems use bacteria to break down fat and grease but are only effective if they are maintained properly.

Store it

Used cooking oil should be stored in closed containers to keep rats out. It can then be collected by a specialist and used for bio diesel or incinerated to generate electricity.

Trap the grease

Passive grease traps or high-tech grease recovery units (GRUs) will collect FOG from the wastewater. However, they must be emptied regularly, contents disposed of by a registered waste handler and records are to be kept.



Legally speaking

Disposing of FOG inappropriately is against the law and you may be prosecuted under the following legislation.

Water Industry Act 1991

Under section 111, it's a criminal offence to discharge into the public sewers any matter which prevents the free flow of wastewater. If the water company incurs costs through unblocking, dealing with pollution and flooding, cleaning or repairing sewers as a result, they can try to recover costs from you. Prosecutions may involve fines or even prison.

Food Safety Act 1990

Local authorities can inspect premises and prosecute for failure to comply with the Food Hygiene Regulations. If fat, oil and grease are having a detrimental effect on drains, a council may issue an emergency prohibition order preventing trading.

Animal By-Products Regulations EC 1774/2002 (ABPR)

To protect the food chain, waste cooking oil from catering premises cannot be used in animal feed. It has to be collected by a licensed waste carrier, and can't be dumped in landfill.

Building Act 1984

Section 59 allows the local authority to require satisfactory provision for drainage of an existing building. This means it could serve notice on you to install a grease trap, for instance.

Environmental Protection Act 1990, Duty of Care

Commercial premises have to comply with Section 34 of the Act when managing and disposing of waste, including cooking oils. That means using an Environment Agency-registered waste handler, and having documentation for disposal. Failure to produce documents may result in a £300 fixed penalty notice or prosecution. The local authority has power to carry out required work and recover costs from you.

Environmental Protection Act 1990 Statutory Nuisance

Statutory nuisance including smells, effluents, accumulation of refuse or premises considered prejudicial to health, is dealt with by the local authority health department. Failure to comply with a resulting abatement notice can result in prosecution and the local authority has the power to carry out work to abate the nuisance and recover costs.





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The Dos and Don'ts of drain etiquette

DO wipe and scrape plates, pots, pans and utensils before washing them

DO collect waste oil in a suitable secure container

DO arrange for oil to be collected by a licensed waste contractor

DO use strainers in the sink plugholes and empty contents in the bin

DO maintain grease traps and enzyme dosing equipment regularly



DO NOT put fats, oil and grease down the sink

DO NOT pour fats, oil and grease down the drain

DO NOT put food scrapings into the sink - use the bin

DO NOT sweep waste into floor drains

DO NOT pour boiling water down the drains to dissolve fats, oil and grease. It does not work



The Main Offenders

1. Food waste

2. Fats, oils
and grease
(FOG)

0800 526 488
www.lanesfordrains.co.uk

3. Plastic Bags

4. Nappies

0800 526 488
www.lanesfordrains.co.uk

5. Sanitary towels
inc tampons,
applicators &
wrappers

6. Cotton buds

0800 526 488
www.lanesfordrains.co.uk

7. Condoms

8. Bandages &
plasters

0800 526 488
www.lanesfordrains.co.uk

9. Baby wipes

10. Medicines inc
needles &
syringes*

* These should be taken to
your local pharmacy or
health authority for
safe disposal

0800 526 488
www.lanesfordrains.co.uk

11. Cleaning wipes

12. Razor blades

0800 526 488
www.lanesfordrains.co.uk



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**Call us today and we
will be delighted to help**