

## Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Program

Residents :

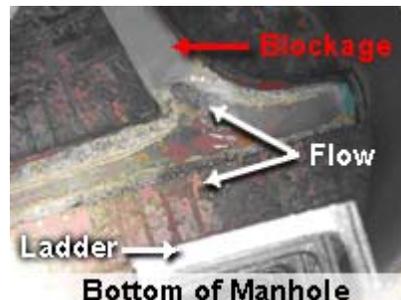
Did you know that nearly 50 percent of all sewage overflows nationwide are caused by homeowners who improperly dispose of everyday **fats, oils and grease (FOG)**? These overflows are not just public health issues, but can result in serious damage to our environment, especially pollution of our streams, [bays, and the Gulf of Mexico](#).

As the agency that responds to sewage overflows, the [Utility Services](#) Department has taken on the challenge of educating residents on how they can and should dispose of these fats, oils and grease which are found in foods and food ingredients we use in our homes everyday: meat, cooking oil, butter, shortening, margarine, baked goods, sauces and dairy products.

What happens when you fry bacon, broil hamburgers or bake meat? When you're finished, what remains in your cooking pan? The answer is FOG – a real enemy of our sewer system – a substance that, when poured down your drain or into your garbage disposal, will build up over time, constrict the flow of wastewater and eventually cause sewers to back up into homes, overflow sewage into streams, rivers and the [bay](#).



Both liquid oils and solid fats should be placed in absorbent containers prior to trashing.



**Bottom of Manhole**  
Blockage from grease build Up  
( Click on image for larger view )

[Ft. Walton Beach](#) Utilities quickly responds to and resolves these backups and overflows. However, prevention is the best and wisest solution to this growing problem.



Sewer Manhole Overflow  
[Can Cause Serious Environmental Damage!](#)



Sewer Maintenance  
[Busting the Blockage!](#)

First and foremost, we must reduce the amount of FOG that enters [the City's](#) sanitary sewage system. To do this, we are asking homeowners to follow these simple steps when they are disposing of fats, oils and grease:

- First, minimize the use of excess cooking oils and grease when cooking or frying.
- The best way to handle used cooking grease is to pour it from the pan while it is still somewhat warm into a container that you can freeze, preferably one you'd have to throw away because it's not accepted by our local recycling program. (Frozen juice cartons work well because they won't melt when they come in contact with hot grease.) Use a rubber spatula to scrape as much of the grease out of the pan as possible, and then it should only take one disposable paper towel to wipe the pan clean.
- Store the container in the freezer, which will keep the grease solid, and pull it out whenever you have fats, oils and grease to dispose of. When it gets full, dump the whole container in the trash.
- Whenever possible, find creative ways to reuse or recycle properly stored FOG. One suggestion is to turn refrigerated FOG (now lard) into wild bird suet by mixing it with bird seed.



### Frequently Asked Questions ( FAQ's )

- **What is FOG?**  
Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) are byproducts of cooking and meat cutting. FOG can be found in meat fats, oils, shortening, butter, margarine, sauces, and dairy products.
- **Why is FOG an issue for me?**  
When FOG are poured down drains or in garbage disposals, they build up in our sewer systems and can back up in our sinks, toilets and possibly into your own or somebody else's [home](#). These backups pose serious public health and environmental problems – and they can be very costly too. Sewer overflows damage the environment by affecting the health of our waterways. By learning how to safely recycle or dispose of FOG, we are accepting some of the responsibility for the health of our environment and the quality of life we enjoy in [Okaloosa](#) County.
- **What can I do?**  
Whenever food is cooked, byproducts (especially cooking oils and grease) should NOT be poured down the drain or into garbage disposals. Pans and pots with heavy grease build up should be wiped with a paper towel before being placed in the dish washer.
- **What about the piping in my house?**  
The first pipes that will become blocked with FOG will be your own pipes and that could result in expensive plumbing bills. Keeping FOG out of your drains and the sewer system is good for your home's plumbing.