



# Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG)

## Source Control Program

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Orange County Sanitation District (OCSD) has adopted a Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) Ordinance which will be effective on January 1, 2005. Concurrently, OCSD will implement a FOG Source Control Program to regulate discharges from Food Service Establishments (FSEs) such as restaurants. Following are frequently asked questions from FSEs impacted by this program.

#### ***Are Food Service Establishments (FSEs) required to have permits to discharge to the sewer system?***

- Yes. Beginning January 1, 2005, it is illegal for FSEs to discharge to the sewer system without a valid FOG Wastewater Discharge Permit (permit).

#### ***Is there any exemption from this permit requirement?***

- Yes. Limited food preparation establishments are not considered FSEs and are exempt from obtaining a permit. Limited food preparation establishments are those that are engaged only in reheating, hot holding or assembly of ready-to-eat food products and as a result, there is no wastewater discharge containing a significant amount of FOG.

#### ***Are FSEs required to apply for a permit prior to January 1, 2005?***

- No. There is no need to apply for a permit at this time. OCSD has simplified the initial permitting process by identifying and conducting inspection of FSEs that need a permit.
- Existing FSEs may expect to receive their permit before January 1, 2005.
- New FSEs and FSEs that have not been identified during the initial permitting process will have to apply for a permit to discharge to the sewer legally.

#### ***Is there a permit fee and how much?***

- No. Although there is no permit fee during the initial permit issuance, OCSD anticipates adoption of a fee resolution by its Board of Directors in March 2005. A \$100 annual permit fee and a \$100 noncompliance fee for each instance of noncompliance are proposed to recover the costs of program administration.
- After the permit fee is adopted, new FSE applicants will be charged the permit fee. Likewise, existing FSEs with permits will be charged the permit fee upon renewal of their expired initial permit.

#### ***Are there additional fees?***

- No. Currently, FSEs are already paying user charges for treatment of wastewater discharged to the sewer, as part of their property taxes. There are no new fees other than the new permit fee and the existing user charges.

### ***What are the major requirements of the permit?***

To reduce FOG discharges to the sewer from FSEs, following are the major requirements of the permit:

- FSEs are required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) in their operations to minimize the discharge of FOG to the sewer system.
- FSEs are required to pretreat their wastewater using grease interceptors to remove FOG prior to discharge to the sewer system. Most FSEs will be granted temporary waivers from this requirement during the next three years; waivers may be re-issued or revoked on a case-by-case basis. Variances may also be issued to allow alternative pretreatment technology that is, at least, equally effective in controlling the FOG discharge in lieu of grease interceptors, to FSEs able to demonstrate that it is impossible or impracticable to install, operate, or maintain grease interceptors.
- All Food Service Establishments required to install grease interceptors or equivalent devices is required to properly operate and maintain the pretreatment system.

### ***What are Best Management Practices (BMPs)?***

- BMPs are schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures and other management practices to prevent or reduce the introduction of FOG to the sewer system. OCSD will provide educational outreach material to FSEs regarding implementation of BMPs.
- BMPs help reduce the amount of FOG and solids going to grease interceptors resulting in less frequent cleaning, thus reducing maintenance costs.

### ***Are all FSEs required to implement BMPs?***

- Yes. Implementation of BMPs is a basic and necessary requirement for all FSEs. The best way to stop FOG from building up in the sewer lines is to prevent it from entering the drains using kitchen BMPs. Implementation of BMPs may involve some minor expense to properly and consistently prevent FOG from getting discharged to the sewer system. BMPs are proven effective and economical tools to control FOG at the source.

### ***Are FSEs required to install grease interceptors?***

- Although the Ordinance requires FSEs to install grease interceptors, the implementation of this requirement is delayed for the next three years. Waivers will be issued to most FSEs, except for the following:
  - Newly constructed FSEs.
  - FSEs that undergo remodeling or a major change in operations.
  - FSEs that have caused or contributed to grease-related blockage in the sewer system, or which have sewer laterals connected to hotspots, or which have been determined to contribute significant FOG to the sewer system based on inspection or sampling.
- Waivers may be re-issued for those FSEs that have insignificant impact or may be revoked at any time when the FSE is determined to have significant impact.

### ***Are FSEs going to be inspected by OCSD?***

- Yes. OCSD will conduct inspections of FSEs as part of its enforcement program to determine compliance with the Ordinance and permit requirements. Inspections will be conducted to evaluate the following:
  - Compliance with kitchen BMP requirements
  - Compliance with grease interceptor requirements for those who are required to have a grease interceptor.
- In lieu of routine kitchen inspections to evaluate implementation of BMPs, FSEs may submit BMP Monitoring Reports semi-annually describing BMPs in place. Details are provided in the permit.
- Grease interceptors will be inspected on a routine basis to evaluate compliance with the pump-out and maintenance requirements.

### ***Are there penalties for noncompliance?***

- Yes. Any person who violates any provision of the FOG Ordinance; or any permit condition, prohibition or effluent limitation; or any suspension or revocation order shall be liable civilly for a penalty pursuant to Article 6 of the FOG Ordinance, for each day in which such violation occurs.
- OCSD, by Order of the General Manager, may physically terminate sewer service on a term of any order of suspension or revocation of a permit or upon the failure of a person not holding a valid wastewater discharge permit to immediately cease discharge, whether direct or indirect, to OCSD's sewer facilities after due notification.