City of Boulder

Grease Interceptors - Proposed Code Revisions

Caroline Erickson
Utilities Department
Water Quality – Industrial Pretreatment

Aug 11, 2022
Wastewater discharges in the City of Boulder are regulated by the Boulder Revised Code.

Fats, oils and grease (FOG) from food service wastewater builds up in the sewer and causes blockages.

West Pearl alley sewer main

West Pearl private lateral
But I don’t serve greasy food...

Oils, butter, cream, sauce, salad dressing, meat fat, and gravy all contain FOG.
Grease interceptors connected to kitchen plumbing fixtures trap solids and FOG.
Interceptors need to be pumped - unmaintained grease interceptors can lead to blockages and overflows, resulting in costly cleanups and shutdowns.
Overview of Proposed Changes
Maintenance and Installation

• Proposed changes to the Boulder Revised Code will affect grease interceptor maintenance and installation.

• Many restaurants are already in compliance with the proposed changes.

• Code changes will:
  • Align code with other Front Range cities – Fort Collins, Denver, CO Springs
  • Meet industry standards for maintenance and best management practices
  • Help protect city wastewater infrastructure
  • Include a pumping waiver option to be considered on a case-by-case basis

• Code changes planned to go before City Council in November 2022, with a proposed effective date in early 2023.
Current: No standard or measurement to define a “full” grease interceptor.

Proposed: Solids plus floating FOG less than 25% of the interceptor capacity.

This grease trap has significant grease and oil in all compartments, as well as grease beyond the V-screen. A cross section of the trap is taken by inserting a clear plastic tube (on right), covering the top to create suction, then removing the tube to visually inspect how deep the grease, oil, and sediment are relative to the depth of the trap.
Exterior Gravity Grease Interceptor

**Current:** 6-month pumping

**Proposed:** 3-month pumping
Hydromechanical Grease Interceptor

**Current:** 6-month pumping

**Proposed:** Monthly pumping
Best Management Practice

**NO!** Emulsifiers or degreasers are not a substitute for pumping – any grease dissolved in your plumbing hardens downstream in the city sewer.
Best Management Practice

Scrape dishes and cookware into compost bin to reduce solids and FOG discharging to grease interceptor.
Best Management Practice

Drain screens keep solids from filling interceptor.
About 10% of full-service restaurants (that produce grease) in the City of Boulder are operating without a grease interceptor. All full-service restaurants that produce grease will need to install grease removal equipment by the end of 2026.

HGI retrofit under dishwash sink.
Pumping records should be kept on file for 3 years and made available to city staff upon request.

Modified pumping schedule application or waiver for special circumstances.
City of Boulder

Grease Interceptors - Proposed Code Revisions

Caroline Erickson
720-614-4460
ericksonc@bouldercolorado.gov