



# RESTAURANTS AND FOOD HANDLERS FACT SHEET

## Pollution Prevention Tips for Restaurants & Other Food Service Facilities

Restaurants and food handling facilities must prevent food wastes, oil, grease, and toxic chemicals such as cleaning products, disinfectants and pesticides from entering the environment.

If cooking oil, grease, food wastes, toxic chemicals or soapy wash waters are dumped in the street gutter, parking lot, alley or a storm drain, they will eventually end up untreated in local creeks and waterways.

Dumping pollutants down sinks or toilets can be just as harmful. Even though everything that is poured down these drains goes to the local wastewater treatment plant, toxic pollutants such as pesticides and cleaning products that cannot be removed by the treatment process end up in our waterways.

### Annual Inspections

Vallejo Flood & Wastewater District inspectors visit food service facilities annually. During an inspection, we will ask to see your grease trap or vault, view your records of proper grease removal, and confirm good housekeeping. There is no charge for these inspections.

### TRAINING YOUR EMPLOYEES

Ongoing employee training is essential to preventing pollution. Managers should train employees regularly about pollution prevention requirements and good housekeeping practices.

For more information, please call the District's Environmental Compliance Division 707.652.7813.

To report an overflow, call the 24-hour hotline at

**707.644.8949**

For emergencies, dial **911**.





### **Keep Grease Out Of Drains**

The following good housekeeping practices can save money and drastically reduce the chance of clogging drains with food and grease. Scrape plates thoroughly into a separate container before rinsing them to reduce grease and food buildup and blockages in your plumbing system. Install screens and traps in sinks and floor drains to catch larger solids. Clean these screens and traps frequently. Don't try to dissolve grease by adding hot water or chemicals. It is only a temporary fix and sends it further down the line.

Recycle your used cooking grease and oil instead of throwing it in the garbage. Use tallow bins or sealed containers with tamper-proof lids. Keep recycling containers closed except when adding oil or grease. Store grease and oil containers away from floor drains and storm drain inlets. Keep exterior of grease recycling containers clean. Avoid spilling grease. Spilled grease is hard to clean up and it will end up in the storm drain system when it rains.

### **Maintain Grease Traps & Interceptors**

Clean grease traps and interceptors on a regular basis to avoid overflows. Both devices need to be cleaned frequently so they work properly. Inspect your service company's work after it is done to make sure that the grease and all liquid is completely removed. Ask for a written receipt and keep maintenance records on site for at least three years.

### **Keep Garbage Areas Clean**

Leaky or overflowing dumpsters, garbage cans and tallow bins are common pollution sources. Follow these steps to keep litter, grease, leftover food and other pollutants under control and out of the storm drain system. Sweep garbage areas daily. Don't use soap or bleach for clean up unless you have a dumpster area that drains to the sanitary sewer. Keep dumpsters and other containers closed and locked to prevent illegal dumping. Bag and seal food waste before disposal. Don't dump liquid waste (grease or fluids) into dumpsters or garbage cans. Inspect your dumpster regularly for leaks. Have your waste hauler repair or replace leaky dumpsters.

### **Cleaning Outdoor Areas**

You're polluting if you clean outdoor areas or equipment in ways that wash soapy water, oil, grease and other pollutants to the ground or storm drain system. Never leave cleaning agents or chemicals on outdoor surfaces because they can be carried into the storm drain system when it rains.

The District requires all businesses in Vallejo to ensure that outdoor cleaning practices include appropriate safeguards to prevent pollutants from entering the storm drain. Businesses are required to train employees about proper cleaning practices or use a recognized cleaning service if outdoor surface cleaning is performed on a for-hire basis. Cleaning of dumpsters, floor mats, exhaust baffles, etc. must be performed indoors or in a dedicated wash area that drains to the sanitary sewer system. Clean up spills quickly to prevent potentially serious problems. Assemble an emergency spill kit (absorbents, broom, mop, etc.) and have it ready in case of a spill.