



# ST. MARY'S COUNTY METROPOLITAN COMMISSION

## STANDARD POLICY

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**OPS-16-01**

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**SUBJECT: GREASE INTERCEPTOR REQUIREMENT AND WAIVER POLICY**

Grease Interceptors are necessary at food service facilities in order to prevent fats, oils and grease from entering the publicly owned sanitary sewer system. Improper disposal of wastewater is a major health issue and a critical violation of the Food Service Facilities Regulations. Food service facilities are defined as a place where food or drink is prepared for sale or service on the premises or elsewhere. This definition includes restaurants, coffee shops, cafeterias, short order cafes, luncheonettes, taverns, sandwich stands, soda fountains, retail markets or retail bakery outlets.<sup>1</sup> Capturing the grease that is generated by a food service facility at the source reduces maintenance costs and decreases the possibility of Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSO) occurring within the sewer system.

In some instances, however, it has been shown that some food service facilities do not produce enough fats, oils or grease to warrant the installation of a grease interceptor. This Policy sets forth the requirements and sizing criteria for grease interceptors, establishes the process by which a waiver of the grease interceptor requirements may be requested, and further establishes the review process for such waiver requests.

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Maryland Regulations; section 10.15.03.02.34

## **1. REQUIREMENT.**

Section 5.8 (c) of the Public Sewer Use Regulation of St. Mary's County provides as follows:

*Grease, oil and sand interceptors shall be provided at any existing facility when in the opinion of the Director, they are necessary for the proper handling of wastewater containing excessive amounts of grease and oil as defined in Section 4.1(q), or sand; except that such interceptors shall not be required for residential users. All interceptor units shall be of the type and capacity approved by the Director and shall be so located to be easily accessible for cleaning and inspection. Such interceptors shall be inspected, cleaned, and repaired regularly, as needed, by the user at their expense. All new food preparation facilities and restaurants are required to provide a 1000 gallon minimum grease interceptor and provide proof of proper maintenance of same if required.<sup>2</sup>*

## **2. SIZING.**

The St. Mary's County Health Department determines the proper size of grease interceptors at Food Service Facilities, when such interceptors are required. With input from the Health Department, the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission shall determine if a grease interceptor is required for a given Food Service Facility. The St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission shall also issue any waiver from grease interceptor requirements.

Waivers, if issued, are based on the information submitted in support of the exemption request, including but not limited to the sample menu, expansion capability, analytical results and any associated procedures. If the type and/or volume of food preparation change in the future; or if it is believed that at any time sewer blockages or other problems in the sewer service lines are the result of the food service facility's operation, the Metropolitan Commission may require the installation a properly sized grease interceptor at that time. Any such required future installation of a grease interceptor could be a significant cost for owner/operator of a food service facility. Accordingly, it may be prudent to consider, and plan for that possibility when installing any plumbing fixtures, when remodeling the existing facility or when making the decision to apply for a waiver.

The following guidelines are to be used when determining the proper sizing for a grease interceptor at a given Food Service Facility. The three categories of grease production at food service facilities are listed below.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Public Sewer Use Regulation of St. Mary's County Maryland; 2004; section 5.8.c

<sup>3</sup> St. Mary's County Health Department, Food Service Facility Grease Trap Fact Sheet, 2008

- a. **Minimum Capacity Grease Interceptor** of 1000 gallons is required for food service facilities of small to moderate size, with cold hold-to-serve or cook to serve menus, no heavy grease producing procedures, and a limited seating of no more than 25.
  - b. **Standard Capacity Grease Interceptor** of 1500 gallons is approved for moderate to large food service facilities with full cook-to-serve menus or complex food preparation procedures, large volume carryout, and with seating capacity between 25 and 150.
  - c. **Large capacity Grease Interceptor** of 2000 gallons is required for large food service facilities with full service menu preparation, using preparation procedures that create large quantities of grease, and with seating capacity over 150.
- 3. EXISTING AND REMODELED FOOD SERVICE FACILITIES.** For all existing or remodeled Food Service Facilities:
- a. If an existing or remodeled Facility falls under the Minimum Capacity or Standard Capacity categories, and it does not have an existing grease interceptor, it may petition the Director for a waiver from the grease interceptor requirement. If any requested waiver is not granted, the Facility shall install the required grease interceptor.
  - b. If an existing or remodeled Facility falls under the Large Capacity category it is ineligible for a grease interceptor waiver, and must install the required grease interceptor.
  - c. No existing or remodeled Facility shall install an under sink grease interceptor unit.
- 4. NEW OR PROPOSED FOOD SERVICE FACILITIES.** For all new or proposed Food Service Facilities:
- a. If the new or proposed facility falls under the Minimum Capacity category, it may petition the Director for a waiver. If any requested waiver is not granted, the Facility shall install the required grease interceptor.
  - b. If the new or proposed Facility falls under the Standard Capacity or Large Capacity categories the Facility shall be required to install the required grease interceptor.
  - c. No new or proposed Facility shall install an under sink grease interceptor.
- 5. WAIVER APPLICATION PROCEDURE.**
- a. Any request for a grease interceptor requirement waiver shall be made in writing, on the prescribed form and submitted to MetCom per the instructions on the form.
  - b. Waiver requests shall be made based upon existing menu offerings, and menu offerings reasonably foreseeable within 18 months from the date the waiver is requested.

- c. At the Director's discretion, if a facility applies for a waiver, a provisional six (6) month waiver may be approved. This provisional waiver will be in conjunction with a sampling program outlined below, at the food service facility's owner/operator's expense. If sampling results show that the six (6) month average effluent concentration of fats, oil and grease is at or above the levels specified in Section 4.1(q), then the provisional waiver shall expire and the food service facility will have six (6) months to comply with the grease interceptor installation requirement in accordance with Section 6.
  - i. Analytical testing must be performed under EPA method 1664, at a Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) certified drinking water lab.
  - ii. Samples must be collected monthly, during operating hours and during peak facility use.
  - iii. All sample results must be forwarded to the Metropolitan Commission as they become available. Submitted materials should include copies of chain of custody forms, analytical results (including detection limits and method used) and quality control (QC) reports.
- d. The Director of the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission shall consider and decide all waiver requests. The waiver is based on the type and/or food volume.
- e. Waiver requests shall be considered based upon the following criteria:
  - i. The Food Service Facility's menu offerings;
  - ii. the Food Service Facility's food preparation equipment and food service preparation procedures;
  - iii. the expected volume of food preparation and customers served;
  - iv. the results of the sampling program.
- f. If a waiver is granted by the Director, copies of the waiver, via certified mail, will be sent to the St. Mary's County Health Department and to the petitioning Food Service Facility. A copy will also be kept with the Operations Department.
- g. Once a waiver is issued, it remains in effect for three (3) years from the date of issuance. Each three years, any Food Service Facility in possession of a waiver must resubmit a waiver request, updating all information required on the prescribed form.
- h. Subject to (f) above, once issued, a waiver shall remain in effect until the Food Service Facility changes hands, is remodeled, or implements a the a menu change likely to result a measurable increase or decrease in grease production. In the event of any of these named events, a new waiver request shall be submitted to the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission.

## **6. COMPLIANCE; PENALTIES.**

- a. Time to comply. Any Food Service Facility required to comply with any provision of this Policy shall do so within six (6) months from that date on which notice of required compliance was sent by the St. Mary's County Metropolitan.
- b. Non-Compliance and Penalties.
  - i. Any Food Service Facility found not to be in compliance with this Policy shall receive written notice from the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission, with copy made to the St. Mary's County Health Department.
  - ii. The Health Department may elect to take independent corrective or punitive action for the non-compliance, which action is outside the scope of this Policy.
  - iii. The Director of the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission may:
    - a. direct staff to terminate the water and/or sewer service to the non-complying Food Service Facility, with copy to the St. Mary's County Health Department;
    - b. direct staff to sample the public sewer collection system, downstream of the non-complying Food Service Facility, to determine if there appears to be an atypical accumulation of fats, oils and grease within proximity to the non-complying Food Service Facility; and/or
    - c. if it can be reasonably concluded by the Director that any atypical accumulation of fats, oils and grease within the proximity of the non-complying Food Service Facility is likely the direct result of the discharges caused by the non-compliance, the Director may direct staff to remove the accumulated fats, oils and grease from the public system and bill the reasonable costs of such removal to the non-complying Food Service Facility.

## **7. LIABILITY.**

If a waiver is extended to the food service facility, the assumption of liability for any damages and/or failures will be the responsibility of the owner/operator of that food service facility. Sewer backups and associated damage that are caused by, either in part or in whole, by the accumulation of fats, oils or grease in the sewer service lines shall not be the responsibility of the Metropolitan Commission.