

# Your guide to the Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Reduction and Licensing Programme

Information for food service establishments (FSE) on the prevention of blockages caused by fats, oils and grease



## Contact Details

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### **Water supply and emergencies**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

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## What is FOG?

'FOG' stands for fats, oils and grease.

## How is FOG generated?

FOG originates from food products such as butter, lard, vegetable oils, animal fats, meats, sauces and dairy products. FOG is generated during the preparation of food and drink containing these products and from the associated cleaning and washing up processes.

## Where is FOG generated?

FOG is generated from kitchens where food is prepared, cooked or served. It can be generated in larger quantities from the commercial kitchens of food service establishments (FSEs).

FSEs include but are not limited to restaurants, takeaways, pubs which serve cooked food, cafés, coffee shops, hotels, B&Bs, convenience stores and supermarkets or garage forecourt shops with delicatessen counters.

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# Why do we need to keep FOG out of our drains and sewers?

When fats, oils and grease (FOG) are hot and are in liquid form, they pour easily down the drain or sink and appear harmless. However, when FOG cools, it solidifies and builds up inside the pipes, similar in effect to the clogging of a human artery.

Maintenance records for wastewater networks show that FOG can be a serious problem in areas where there is a concentration of FSE with commercial kitchens.

## **FOG should never be washed down the sink!**

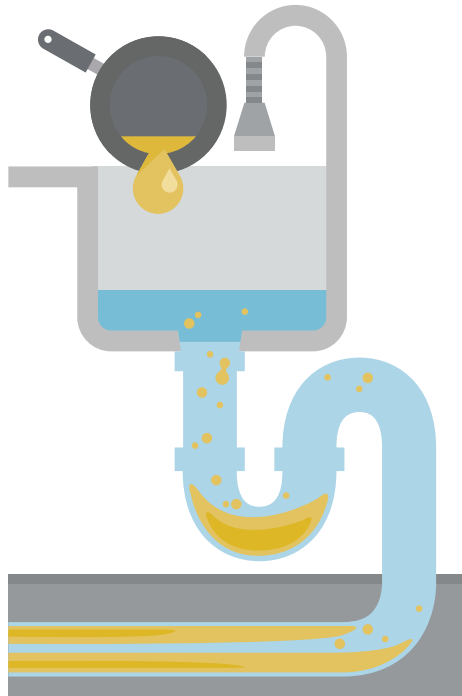
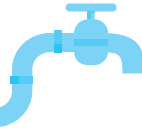


Illustration of FOG clogging inside the pipes

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## Did you know?

By participating in the FOG programme outlined in this booklet and observing the checklist on page 12 and 13, you can help keep FOG out of your drains



# The consequences of FOG blockages

## Many FOG blockages have resulted in:

- > Raw sewage overflowing into business premises causing a health hazard, odour problems, the risk of rodent infestations and expensive clean up for the business owner;
- > Raw sewage overflowing and flooding into streets and other public areas causing a public health hazard and expensive clean up; and
- > Raw sewage overflowing into streams, rivers or open waters creating an environmental and public health hazard.

**FOG should never be washed down the sink!**

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## How are FOG blockages cleared?

The removal of FOGs is difficult and expensive. If your business premises or your neighbour's premises are flooded due to sewer blockages caused by FOG, you may be liable for the following:

- > Hire of expensive specialist machinery such as vacuum tankers;
- > Hire of specialist personnel experienced at working in potentially dangerous confined spaces;
- > Costs incurred by business interruption;
- > Costs relating to loss of stock; and
- > General clean-up costs.

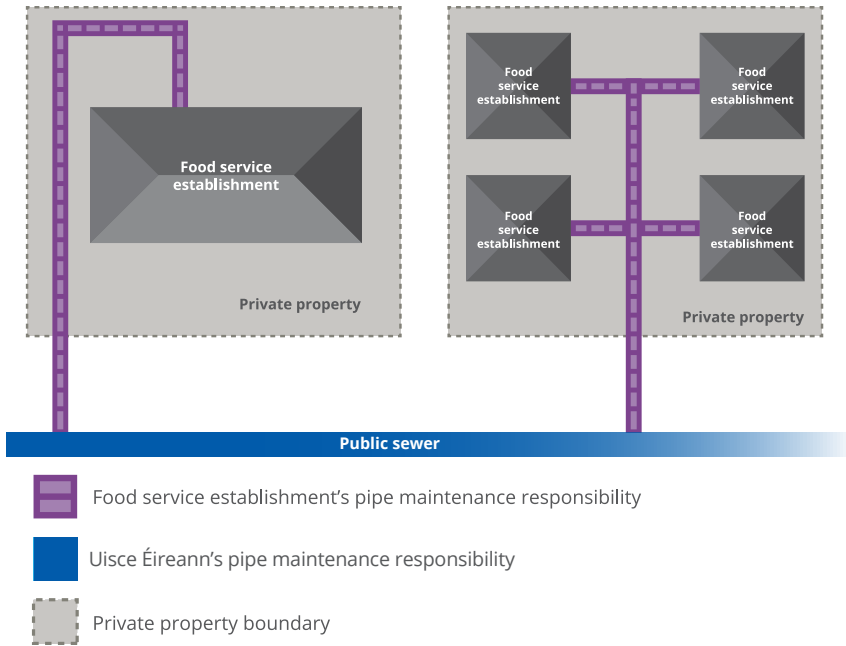
## Whose responsibility is it to clear FOG blockages?

Uisce Éireann is responsible for the operation and maintenance of public sewers. This includes clearing blockages in sewers caused by FOG.

Blockages in private drains connecting to the public sewer are the responsibility of the business/property owner. Please see the illustration overleaf:

# Food service establishment

## Wastewater pipe maintenance responsibility



For illustration purposes only. Please refer to the Water Services Acts for definitive pipe maintenance responsibilities.

## What is Uisce Éireann doing to address FOG issues?

Uisce Éireann is working with Local Authorities to introduce programmes to proactively manage FOG waste. In line with international best practices, these programmes aim to manage and limit the discharge of FOG to the wastewater network, through education, monitoring, and licensing trade effluent discharged to the sewer.

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## Trade effluent explained

Trade effluent is any liquid waste (effluent), other than surface water and domestic wastewater that is discharged from a premises being used for a business, trade or industry.

Domestic wastewater is any liquid waste which originates predominantly from day to day human activities including personal washing and toilet use.



## What is a Trade Effluent FOG Licence?

Under Section 16 of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, (as amended), a person may not discharge trade effluent to sewer except in accordance with a licence issued under that act.



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Trade Effluent FOG Licences set out conditions that the FSE must comply with relating to:

- > The nature, composition and volume of the trade effluent discharge;
- > The standards and practices associated with the design, operation and maintenance of grease and FOG removal;
- > The records that must be kept; and
- > Applicable charges as approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities.

## What am I legally allowed to discharge to the sewer?

If you do not have a Trade Effluent FOG Licence, you are only allowed to discharge domestic effluent which is typically wastewater from personal washing, domestic and toilet use.



### Did you know?

When fats, oils and/or grease cools down and combines with other debris, it forms a solid material that can block your drain and lead to flooding

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# The FOG Reduction and Licensing Programme

Uisce Éireann is working in partnership with Local Authorities to implement a national FOG Reduction and Licensing Programme that standardises and builds on existing regional initiatives.

**Please see our step-by-step guide to the programme below:**

## 1 Notification

You may receive notification that the FOG Reduction & Licensing Programme is coming to your area.

## 2 Site visit and assessment

Our FOG advisors will meet with you at your premises and answer any questions you may have on the management of FOG, and your licensing requirements.

They will also assess the risk from your kitchen discharge to the wastewater network and advise you of best kitchen management practice for the prevention of FOG blockages.

## 3 Information on licence requirements and application process

You will receive information on your licence requirements under Section 16 of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977 (as amended) and details of the application process from our FOG Advisors.

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## Apply for a Licence

a. Licence application forms are available from Uisce Éireann. If you have not yet received a Trade Effluent FOG Licence application form, please visit

[www.water.ie/fog](http://www.water.ie/fog) or call **1800 278 278**.

There is a once off licence application fee and details of this fee are set out at

[www.water.ie/business/trade-effluent/about/](http://www.water.ie/business/trade-effluent/about/)

b. Fill in your details and click on “Generate reference no.”

c. Take a note of the unique reference number that has been assigned to you. It will also be sent by email to the email address you provided.

d. Click on “Download Application Form” and save it to your computer.

e. Complete the application form using the guide on page 6, and send it to [dischargetosewer@water.ie](mailto:dischargetosewer@water.ie)

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## Licence granted

You will receive your licence by email. Your licence will contain the conditions with which you must comply. For example, you may need to install an appropriately sized grease trap.

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## Managing compliance with your licence

Our FOG advisors will work with you to implement best management practices and help you to continue to prevent expensive blockages caused by FOG.

**Remember: FOG stands for fats, oils and grease.**

**FOG should never be washed down the sink!**

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# The benefits of the FOG Reduction and Licensing Programme

## The programme will bring the following benefits:

- > Reduced odours;
- > Reduced number of blockages of private drains and public sewers;
- > Reduced likelihood of businesses or neighbouring premises being flooded and associated clean-up costs;
- > Reduced environmental damage to rivers, streams and the sea;
- > Reduced traffic disruptions and associated costs due to road flooding;
- > Reduced likelihood of loss of stock affected by flooding; and
- > Reduced need to hire expensive machinery, such as vacuum tankers, and specialist personnel.

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## What this means for your business

If you are operating to best practice, you may already have a grease trap or grease removal unit(s). You should be servicing this equipment in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations, recording how your used cooking oil is recycled and keeping records of all maintenance and servicing.

If you are operating a FSE, it is likely that you are generating FOG from your activity. In order to minimise the effects of these discharges, you should implement international best practice for FOG management. Our team of FOG experts can help advise you on how to do this.

If trade effluent from your business is discharged to the sewer and you do not have a Trade Effluent FOG Licence, you will need to apply for one. Our team of FOG experts can help advise you on how to do this.

In the meantime, please read our tips on how to reduce the amount of FOG discharged from your business premises and prevent expensive blockages.

**Removing FOG at source is the most effective way to prevent FOG blockages.**

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# Help prevent expensive blockages in your kitchen and your local area

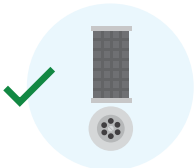
Follow this simple checklist:



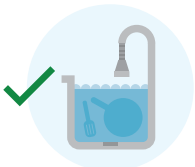
**Do** wipe and scrape plates, pans and utensils into a suitable bin before washing



**Do** collect all used cooking oil into a suitable container and arrange for its collection by an appropriately authorised collector



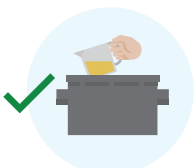
**Do** use strainers in sink plug holes, then empty into a suitable bin



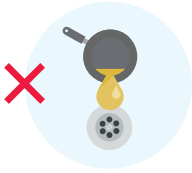
**Do** clean equipment in dedicated wash-up sinks



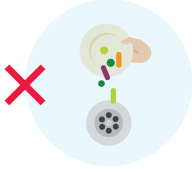
**Do** mop up grease spills with kitchen towel and put them in an appropriate bin



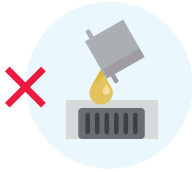
**Do** make sure your grease trapping equipment is properly maintained by kitchen staff/authorised contractors and maintenance details are recorded



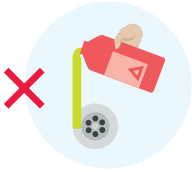
**Don't** put fats, oils or grease down the sink



**Don't** put food scrapings into the sink



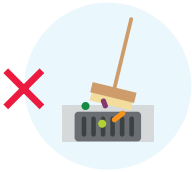
**Don't** pour fats, oils or grease down the floor drain



**Don't** pour harmful chemicals down the sink or drain to try and dissolve fats, oils or grease



**Don't** clean equipment in sinks designated for food preparation



**Don't** sweep kitchen waste into floor drains

For further guidance on FOG (fats, oils and grease) and trade effluent licensing, please contact Uisce Éireann by email at [FOG@water.ie](mailto:FOG@water.ie) or by telephone on **1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**.

