



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Public Utilities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT

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When Preparing Meals for the Holidays, Remember to Never Pour Cooking Grease Down the Drain

SAN DIEGO – With the holidays approaching, some families will be preparing large meals for family and friends. It's important to remember at this time that cooking grease is one of the primary causes of residential pipeline and sewer main clogs resulting in sewer spills. The spilled sewage eventually reaches San Diego's bays, rivers, and beaches, causing unsafe conditions and temporary closures.

All cooking oils disposed of improperly can cause problems in the sewer system. These include:

- frying oil
- salad oil
- meat drippings
- bacon fat
- greasy leftovers

Cooking grease coats pipelines similar to the way that fatty foods clog human arteries. The grease clings to the inside of the pipelines, eventually causing complete blockage. Costly home plumbing bills are often the result of grease-clogged pipelines. Residential pipelines clog easily since they are only 2 inches to 4 inches in diameter.

Many people are unaware that pouring hot water and detergent down the drain only breaks up grease temporarily. Grease should *never* be poured down the drain. If small amounts of grease accidentally get into your drain, flush immediately with *cold* water. Flushing grease down the toilet also causes sewer backups.

By following a few simple steps, you can help prevent costly sewer spills in the future.

- Step 1: All cooking oil should be poured into an old milk carton, frozen juice container, or other nonrecyclable package, and disposed of in the garbage, not down the drain.
- Step 2: Dishes and pots that are coated with greasy leftovers should be wiped clean with a disposable towel prior to washing or placement in dishwashers.
- Step 3: Instead of placing fat trimmings from meat in the garbage disposal, put them in a trash can.

Always put cooking grease containers and greasy towels in a plastic bag before disposing of them in your trash bag. Never dispose of cooking grease directly into your automated trash container.

Report Spills!

If you see or smell something you think might be a sewer spill, report it immediately by calling the City of San Diego's Public Utilities Department's emergency line at 619-515-3525. Be prepared to describe the location and the nature of the problem.

For more information about the Public Utilities Department's Grease Disposal Program, visit us on the web at www.sandiego.gov/mwwd/sewerspill/grease/index.shtml

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