

THE INS & OUTS OF SEWER INLETS

One of the world's shortest lists is the list of what should go down a sewer inlet.

In fact if it was any shorter, it wouldn't be a list at all! So here it is...



RAINWATER

Just rainwater and **NOTHING ELSE!**

Don't throw trash down the inlets, commonly known as storm drains. Some inlets lead directly into local rivers and streams!

You wouldn't think that a list with just **ONE ITEM** would be hard to remember. Yet every day, some Philadelphians put other things down the city's 75,000 sewer inlets.

Some of those things do **MAJOR HARM** to the sewer system: tires, street litter, broken appliances, plastic bags, and jugs. Others, like used motor oil, old car batteries, paints, and household and garden chemicals – even dog droppings – **POLLUTE OUR RIVERS AND STREAMS.**

During late summer and early fall, fallen leaves add to the problem. Some city residents don't bother to clean leaves and twigs from their street gutters. So there they sit, waiting for the next rainstorm to wash them into an inlet.



LEAVES AND OTHER DEBRIS can cause real problems. To begin with, anything but rainwater can clog the sewer inlets and the grates that cover them. When it rains, the water then has no place to go. Either way, you could end up with **FLOODED STREETS.**

Even if an inlet doesn't look clogged, debris in the gutter and on the street pose a risk. Every time it rains, rainwater washes trash into the sewers and then directly into our rivers, creeks and streams.

Some of the rubbish washed into the sewer stays there, choking the sewer. Besides street flooding, this also results in the **BUILD-UP OF DANGEROUS AND FOUL-SMELLING GASES.** No wonder, then, it's actually illegal to put leaves, trash and debris down the inlet.

Besides not using inlets as garbage cans, there are several steps you can take to keep the sewer system flowing freely...

FIRST

Know where the inlets are on your block.

Most city streets have sewer inlets on the corners and in the middle of the block. If you see an inlet blocked with leaves or debris, call (215) 685-6300 and report the problem. We'll send out a crew to clean it. When the crew arrives, help us by moving your car or truck away from the front of the inlet.

SECOND

Do the right thing.

If more people would "**BAG IT, CAN IT OR RECYCLE IT**" we wouldn't have nearly as much street flooding.

So sweep the leaves and trash from the sidewalk and gutter in front of your home. Put leaves in bags, stash the trash cans and use routine trash collections to get rid of them. Take an active part in the city's recycling program and neighborhood clean-ups. Shop at stores that sponsor plastic-bag recycling programs.

THIRD

Dispose of household wastes properly.

Some service stations will take your used motor oil; call the Water Department at (215) 685-6300 for the names and addresses of those near you. State law says that any retailer that sells or installs batteries must accept your used battery for recycling – keep that in mind when you change the battery in your car or truck.

Call the Streets Department at (215) 686-5560 to find out dates and locations of their Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off Events.

JUST RAINWATER AND NOTHING ELSE!



Grease Disposal Guide:

What should you know?

Do you own a restaurant or bar?

Are you a lunch truck vendor?

Are you a homemaker interested in learning how to properly dispose of grease?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, these guidelines will be beneficial to you and could help you avoid possible fines and penalties.

You'll be surprised to know that one of the biggest problems for the city's sewer system is common grease, oil, and fats from cooking.

A significant amount of grease gets into the sewer system from kitchen clean-ups and hosing down restaurant floors. Pouring cooking grease into sinks, tubs, or storm drains can cause problems as well.

Grease: What's the big deal?

Grease, oils, and fats will not dissolve in water.

Therefore, grease will never dissolve in water in the sewer system. Inside a sewer system, grease builds up and blocks sewers. If sewers are blocked completely, sewage backs up and spills out, often into homes and businesses.

Cleaning up grease build-up and blockages in the sewer system can translate into very high costs for the Philadelphia Water Department. **Ultimately, you pay the bill since these costs are passed on to customers through higher water and sewer bills.**

Soaps, detergents, caustic agents, and "wonder bugs" do little to combat grease. Inside the sewer system, grease cools and returns to its original state forming a mass of grease and clogging the system.

Caustic chemicals blend with grease to temporarily soften it. Inside the sewer system, grease returns to its original state. **These chemicals can cause serious damage to your water pipes.**

There are several types of "wonder bugs" or grease-eating bacteria on the market. They are not effective enough in the sewer system to eliminate grease build-up or blockages.

Dispose of your grease properly.

If a container of cooking oil or grease that has been disposed of improperly is traced back to a business that you own, you will be billed for the cost of facility repair, sampling, and clean up. You may have to pay hefty fines, and could even be forced to close your business. So how should you deal with your grease problems? Here are some procedures that you should be following.

What you should do:

For Homes: Make sure that all animal fats and other grease are disposed of as solid waste. Dispose of fats or grease in garbage bags, so it can be hauled away by the Sanitation Department.

For Commercial Establishments:

Restaurants and other businesses dealing with significant amounts of grease must install devices such as grease traps. A grease trap is designed to prevent grease, oil, solids, and other debris from entering the sewer system.

Cleaning up grease is expensive and YOU pay the bill.

Grease traps should be checked periodically for backups, foul odors, and high Biochemical Oxygen Demand levels to ensure that they are functioning correctly. A reliable pumper should also pump the trap out to remove collected oil and grease at regular intervals. Remember that

the grease trap is only meant to handle grease that gets into drains from washing dishes and cooking utensils. It does not allow you to dump your grease into drains.

You should have contracts with reputable cooking oil disposal and recycling service providers. They must give you a service agreement stating how often, where, and what quantities are involved in the disposal of your cooking oil and grease. Do not take the services of a friend or neighbor who offers to take the grease off your hands for a "small fee."

There is no "miracle" solution for grease.

Choose rendering services that provide cleanup responses to accidental spills of cooking oil and grease at your business. Use a company that will remove waste from and clean grease traps. The same rendering

provider may provide this service, or you may have to look for a different provider.

Do some research and find the best cooking oil and grease disposal services to suit your needs. Two firms that provide these services are:

Darling Rendering Services
(800) 914-1221

MOPAC (Greaseland)
(800) 967-8325, extension 3206



For more information, contact the Philadelphia Water Department at (215) 685-6300.