



Gwinnett County

Department of Water Resources

Unclog the FOG

The cooking that we all do each day can potentially have a negative impact on the sewer pipes in both our homes and the public sewer system. As winter approaches, and with it our extra holiday cooking, so does more time in the kitchen and all the byproducts that come with it.

FOG – fats, oils and grease, is a problem because it clings to the sewer pipes both inside of our homes and throughout the County. Over time, this build up creates clogs in the system which block the flow of wastewater within the pipes. The same is true if you are on septic. FOG can clog the pipes in the home, fill the tank faster, and even get into the drain field leading to poor performance and potential system failure.

The sewer system is comprised of more than 3,000 miles of pipeline. Most of the pipes carrying wastewater from our homes and businesses, are only a few inches in diameter. Although the County maintains a robust preventative maintenance program which provides routine flushing of the sewer system, we need residents' help to make sure the public system stays in tip-top shape.

So where does our dirty water go when the pipes are clogged? There are two options; it either backs up into our homes or spills out into the environment. These backups may not be common, but they do happen and they're expensive for everyone. Aside from financial costs, spills or overflows from FOG cause ecological damage to our waterways and can potentially be harmful to human health.

Although FOG is a major player in the damage done to our collection system, anything that has the ability to block a sewer pipe can cause a backup. This includes paper towels, cleaning wipes, and hygiene products. So, it is important to remember that toilets are not trashcans.

What can you do in order to help keep FOG and other debris out of the sewer system?

- Pour cooled oils or grease into disposable containers which can be thrown into the trash
- Use paper towels to wipe off excess FOG from dishes and cooking surfaces
- Ban the use of your garbage disposal and use sink strainers to catch food scraps

For more information about the County's collection system or more simple tips on how to prevent FOG clogs, please visit www.unclogthefog.com.

