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Grease Interceptors: Fact Sheet

Why are grease interceptors required at foodservice establishments?

Both the Onondaga County Plumbing Code and the New York State Building Code require installation of a device (or devices) to contain grease at all food service establishments.

Grease must be properly contained to prevent blockage of piping in the building's plumbing system and in the public sewer system. Such blockages cause sewage to backup and can result in unsanitary conditions; moreover, such blockages present costly and unnecessary maintenance problems.

What types of plumbing fixtures are subject to the requirements for grease containment?

The Onondaga County Plumbing Code and the New York State Building Code require that any plumbing fixture that may discharge grease to the plumbing system must have provisions in place to contain the grease. Included in such fixtures are pot sinks, hand sinks, mop sinks, food preparation sinks, floor drains, floor sinks, dishwashers, pre-rinse sinks, WOK stove drains, steam tables, and hood drains.

What are exterior grease interceptors?

Exterior grease interceptors are concrete structures, located outside the building, to which all kitchen plumbing is connected. Many municipalities, including Onondaga County, require that grease-intercepting structures be installed for all food service establishments. Onondaga County Code requires a 1,000 gallon properly baffled grease interceptor.

Why exterior grease interceptors are required? What are the advantages of having one installed?

Exterior grease interceptors are required because they remove grease in the most sanitary, efficient, and economical manner. Located outside the building and the kitchen, they can readily be cleaned at any time by a truck equipped with a vacuum hose. Since they have a larger size, they can be cleaned less frequently and are more economical than small interior interceptors are. An added advantage to exterior grease interceptors is that more kitchen fixtures can be added at any time without the need to modify the system for grease containment.

What about interior grease interceptors? When are they allowed, and what are their limitations?

Interior grease interceptors are only allowed when the installation of an exterior grease manhole is determined to be infeasible. Interior grease interceptors are generally used to serve a single or limited number of fixtures. The required size of the interceptor is determined based on the size and quantity of fixtures and equipment discharging into the dedicated grease waste line. In addition, several other contributing factors are calculated into the sizing of the vessel. See the Grease Calculator below.

How are interior grease interceptors cleaned?

Interior grease interceptors are cleaned either manually or with a vacuum hose. When opened for cleaning, the interceptor typically emits a foul odor. Because of the unsanitary nature of the cleaning operation, it can only be performed when the food preparation area is not in use. These interior interceptors may require cleaning as frequently as weekly.

When do the current requirements for grease interceptors apply to existing food service establishments?

All food service establishments that are remodeled, change plumbing equipment, or change ownership are required to meet updated code requirements including current requirements for proper grease containment. In addition, when the operations of an existing establishment result in a grease problem, that establishment may be required to meet current standards.



For questions about food service operations and equipment and facility layout, call Onondaga County Food Protection at 315-435-6607

For questions regarding grease interceptors and plumbing installations, call Onondaga County Plumbing Control at 315-435-6614

Grease Calculator

Total calculated occupant load	
Hours/days of operation	
Estimated total number of meals prepared daily	
Menu items/type of cuisine	
Dinnerware: Washable/reusable?	
Complete list of kitchen equipment related to plumbing: hand sink, pot sink, prep sink, dishwasher, pre-rinse sink, mop sink, disposal, etc.	
Proposed location of device (indoors/outdoors)	
Vertical separation between equipment served and location of device	
Floor plan of kitchen & serving area	
Accessible toilet rooms provided	

The following pages contain the forms that must be used to request permission to install an *interior* grease interceptor. The application is a two-step process:

- The property owner must complete Step 1: justify the need for an *interior* grease interceptor, and show why an exterior grease interceptor cannot be built.
- The individual who will operate the foodservice establishment must complete Step 2 and provide the details of how the grease interceptor would be installed.

Step 2: Application for Interior Grease Interceptor

The operator of the food service establishment must complete step 2

Name of facility: _____

Address: _____

Check one: New establishment Change of ownership Same-owner remodel

If installation of an exterior grease manhole is determined to be infeasible, approval of plans to install an interior grease interceptor will be considered and will be based on information submitted by the applicant. The applicant must submit the following items in proper form:

- Floor plan of kitchen area showing all fixtures, floor drain, and direct and indirect wastes
- Plumbing layout prepared by licensed plumbing contractor or plumbing designer
- Specifications—sized on all fixtures and equipment from which grease may be introduced to the plumbing system

By signing below, the applicant indicates that he/she understands the following:

- The requirement for entering into a contract with a registered waste hauler for periodic cleaning of the interceptor (for example, weekly, monthly, or quarterly) as needed to prevent grease from entering the sewer system
- Any future change to the proposed equipment may require a change in the size of the grease interceptor.

Application submitted by: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

*If the applicant is **not** the owner of the property, the property-owner must fill out the items below:*

Property owner: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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