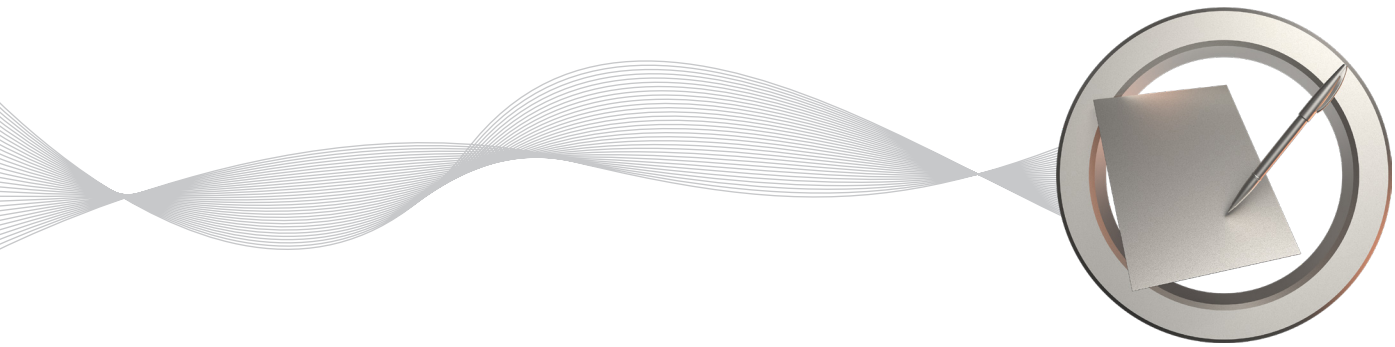
Orange County
Sanitation District

FACT SHEET

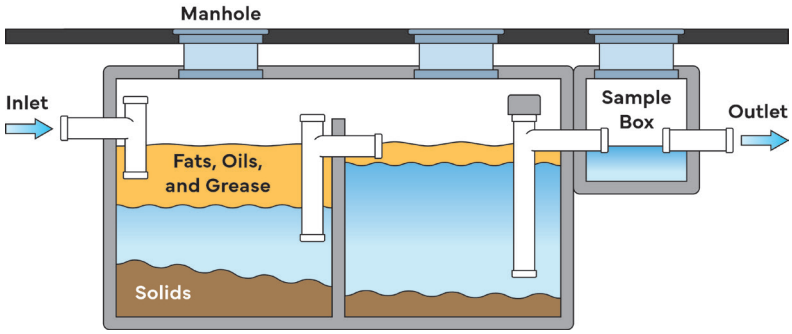


Grease Interceptors and Basic Design Guidelines

OCSAN
ORANGE COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT



Grease Interceptors



A grease interceptor is a control device that is designed to collect and store FOG and food waste from wastewater discharged from FSEs until it can be removed and disposed of by wastehauling. It is typically a large concrete, fiberglass or heavy-duty plastic box with two or three compartments and is usually installed underground outside FSEs.

Grease interceptors, used with BMPs prevent FOG from entering the sanitary sewer system.

Who Needs Them?

- Required for FSEs.
- Required for facilities generating FOG-laden wastewater.

Basic Design Requirements

Grease interceptors separate FOG from wastewater by gravity. Since FOG weighs less than water, the grease floats on the water surface when given sufficient time.

Effective grease separation depends on:

- **Time**—Allows grease to separate.
- **Temperature**—Cooling allows grease to solidify and separate from the water.
- **Turbulence**—Controlled flow into the interceptor allows for gravity separation.
- **Tank Size**—Enough storage between cleanings.

Sizing (OC San Requirements)

- Minimum size: 750 gallons.
- Maximum size: 1,500 gallons (unless otherwise approved).
- Must comply with Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC), Appendix H.

Installation Requirements

- Located close to kitchen fixtures.
- Accessible for inspection and maintenance.
- Minimum two compartments:
    - Inlet: ~2/3 capacity of entire interceptor.
    - Outlet: ~1/3 capacity of entire interceptor.
- Access shall be provided by manholes over the inlet and the outlet, and for each 10 feet of length for interceptors over 20 feet long.
- Manholes shall extend to grade, have a minimum size of 24 inches in diameter, and have a gasketed cover at grade.
- Must comply with Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC), Appendix H
- Dishwashers and bathroom fixtures must bypass interceptor.

Maintenance Requirements

- Use permitted grease haulers only.
- Complete pump-out and cleaning required; surface skimming is not allowed.
- FOG and solids may not exceed 25 percent of hydraulic depth.
- Minimum cleaning frequency:
    - At least every six months.
    - Most FSEs: every three months.
- Maintain manifests, receipts, and cleaning logs onsite.
- Backups, odors, or slow drainage may indicate the interceptor needs service.