

**Onondaga County Health Department
Division of Environmental Health**

Fact Sheet on Grease Interceptors

Why are grease interceptors required at food service establishments?

The requirement for installation of a device or devices to provide for containment of grease at all food establishments is a part of both the Onondaga County Plumbing Code and the New York State Building Code. Proper containment of grease is necessary in order to prevent blockage of piping in the building plumbing system and in the public or private sewer system. Such blockages can result in unsanitary conditions caused by the backup of sewage and represent costly and unnecessary maintenance problems.

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

The above referenced Codes require that provisions be in place to contain grease from any plumbing fixture that may result in discharge of grease to the plumbing system. 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 grease intercepting manholes?

Grease intercepting manholes are concrete structures located outside of the building to which all kitchen plumbing is connected. Many municipalities including Onondaga County require that they be installed for all food service establishments. The Onondaga County Plumbing Code requires a 4' diameter minimum size manhole.

Why are grease intercepting manholes required and what are the advantages of having one installed?

Grease intercepting manholes are required because they provide for removal of grease in the most sanitary, efficient and economical manner. Located outside of the building and the kitchen they can be readily cleaned at any time by a truck equipped with a vacuum hose. With their larger size they can be cleaned less frequently and more economically than small interior interceptors. They have the added advantage that additional 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 not feasible. Interior grease interceptors are generally used to serve a single or limited number of fixtures. The size of the interceptor is determined based on the size and type of fixture discharging to the interceptor. If the fixture is replaced with a larger one or if additional plumbing is added to the kitchen, the interceptor will need to be replaced with one or more interceptors of proper size. Also, garbage disposal units are not allowed on interior grease interceptors.

How are interior grease interceptors cleaned?

Interior grease interceptors are cleaned either manually or by a contractor using a vacuum hose. When opened for cleaning the interceptor typically emits a foul odor. Due to the unsanitary nature of the cleaning operation it can only be performed at a time during which the food preparation area is not in use. Frequency of cleaning can be as often as weekly in some situations.

What other factors need to be considered when planning for installing an interior grease interceptor?

Installation of an interior grease interceptor requires careful consideration of a number of factors. For larger units it may be necessary to recess the interceptor in the floor in order to provide proper drainage from the sinks. The unit also would need to be recessed in the floor to serve floor drains and floor sinks. Other factors that need to be considered are location and access for cleaning, proper venting of the plumbing system and provision of flow control where required.

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, existing establishments whose operation results in a grease problem may be required to meet current standards.

Questions regarding food service operations and equipment and facility layout can be directed to:

**Food Protection Section
435-6607**

Questions regarding grease interceptors and plumbing installations can be directed to:

**Plumbing Control Section
435-6614**

Rev. 2/98