What is FOG and what is the FOG control program?
F.O.G. stands for Fats, Oils and Grease. Fats, oils and greases are natural by-products of the cooking and food preparation process. The FOG control program is being implemented by the Halifax County Service Authority in order to monitor and reduce the amount of FOG that enters our sanitary sewer system.

Why shouldn’t FOG go down the drain?
FOG sticks to the sides of pipes and eventually clogs them. This backs up the pipes and causes sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs), possibly in your home or yard!

How does FOG create a sewer blockage?
Fats, oils and grease in a warm liquid form may appear to be harmless since they flow easily down the drain. However, as the liquid cools, the FOG solidifies and separates from other liquids in the sewer pipes. The layer of FOG sticks to the sewer pipes and, over time, the flow of wastewater becomes restricted and can cause a backup or overflow.

What are the sources of FOG? Who produces FOG?
Common sources of FOG include meat fats, dairy products, food scraps, cooking oils, baked goods, sauces, dressings, sandwich spreads, gravies, marinades, dairy products, shortening, lard, butter and margarine. FOG is produced by restaurants, cafeterias, delis, bakeries, residential homeowners, daycares, assisted living, social halls….. basically, and anyone who deals with food, especially while cooking.

Why is the issue of sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) important?
Forty-eight percent (48%) of the Authority’s sanitary sewer calls can be attributed to FOG. Overflowing sewers release bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens that may be dangerous to human health. The sewage may be released into your business or home, or into our waterways, streets, and parks. SSOs are unpleasant and expensive to clean up, and if they occur on private property, it is you, the property owner, who are responsible for the clean-up.

Is there a law against overflowing sanitary sewers
Yes. The federal Clean Water Act and the Virginia DEQ comparable water quality regulations prohibit wastewater discharges into the waters of the state without a permit.

Can the Authority tell where grease is coming from?
Yes. By checking manholes and using CCTV, the Authority can tell which sanitary service area and usually which specific building or neighborhood grease is coming from. If grease blockages are occurring frequently in a certain area, the Authority will make an effort to inform the residents in the area so that they can be more aware of their grease disposal methods and help to fix the problem.

What should I do if I experience a sewer blockage or overflow?
First, call the Authority at (434) 222-7798. They will come and determine whether the blockage is on your property or on Authority property. If the blockage is occurring on Authority property and cannot be traced exclusively back to you, then our staff will coordinate and complete the clean up. If the blockage is on your property and is obviously due to your improper practices, you will need to hire a plumber to fix the problem.

What do I do with the oil used in deep fryers?
Wait until the oil in your fryer has completely cooled and use a funnel to pour the oil into a container. If you are not planning to reuse the oil, seal the container tightly and put it in the trash. Never pour oil down your home’s plumbing or into the storm drain.
Should I use my garbage disposal?
Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of your sewer system. In fact, garbage disposals help contribute to the problem of blocked sanitary sewer pipes. Food particles stick to the grease that clings to pipe walls and speeds the blockage of pipes. Garbage disposals use large amounts of water and electricity. Reduce or eliminate their usage to lower your utility bills.

Should I use large quantities of detergent to wash grease down the drain?
Products such as detergents that claim to dissolve grease may pass the grease down the pipeline and cause problems elsewhere. In short, you remove the grease from your immediate vicinity only to help create a larger problem downstream.

Why should homeowners take the responsibility? Isn’t the sanitary sewer system the responsibility of the Authority?
The environment affects all of us. Being good environmental stewards and preventing sewer overflows allows every person to live in a safer and healthier area. If a sewer backup occurs on your property, it is your responsibility to clean up. Repeated calls to clean out blocked sewers result in higher rates for all users.

Why are oils that do not solidify a problem?
Oils entering the system cause problems in two ways:
1. Many do solidify at lower temperatures and therefore clog the system. Even if they don’t solidify they often bind to other forms of fats and grease.
2. Some oils move through the system so quickly that they cannot be fully broken down in the treatment process.

How should I dispose of fats, oils and grease?
Larger quantities of fats, oils and grease left in pans from cooking should be placed in a tin can and stored in the refrigerator or freezer. Once the container is full it can be discarded in your household garbage. Smaller amounts of cooled grease, salad dressings and sauces should be scraped into the trash with a spatula. Any excess grease can be absorbed with a paper towel and tossed into the garbage.

Isn’t throwing containers full of grease into the landfill just creating a different problem?
Over time, fats, oils and grease are very effectively broken down under landfill conditions. Fats, oils and grease cause greater environmental problems when they enter the wastewater system.

What can I do to keep fats, oils and grease out of the sewer system?
By using Residential Kitchen Best Management Practices (below) and sharing this knowledge with your friends and neighbors.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do Not.....</th>
<th>Do.....</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pour cooking residue directly into the drain.</td>
<td>Wipe pots, pans, and work areas prior to washing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dispose of food waste into the garbage disposal.</td>
<td>Dispose of food waste directly into the trash or compost area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pour waste oil directly into the drain.</td>
<td>Collect waste oil and store for recycling.</td>
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