

Managing greasy waste in the retail food industry

What is greasy waste?

Greasy waste is classified as trade waste and incorporates any liquid waste produced by a commercial business as a result of food preparation, cooking and cleaning activities, which is then discharged through the sewerage system.

Food preparation businesses produce a large portion of greasy waste. These businesses range from fast food outlets, supermarkets, butchers, bakeries and smaller take away stores.

Grease is released in a liquid or emulsified form but it can solidify as it cools and cause blockages in the sewerage system. This can result in a build up in the system, leading to sewerage overflows into the environment, households and businesses.

You must have a Discharge Permit from Power and Water Corporation to discharge trade waste into Power and Water's treatment system.

Some businesses that produce trade waste

If your business falls under one of the categories below that produces greasy waste, please contact Power and Water and we will guide you through the process of obtaining a Trade Waste Permit:

- Bakeries
- Butchers
- Cafeterias
- Restaurants
- Schools (with domestic kitchens)
- Delicatessens
- Kitchens in commercial operating facilities such as nursing homes, day care centres and hospitals
- Hotels, motels or function centres
- Cafes
- Canteens
- Supermarkets
- Fast food outlets
- Take away food shops
- Caterers
- Coffee shops
- Ice cream shops
- Cake making, baking or decorating.

Grease traps/ arrestors

Businesses that produce greasy waste are usually required to install and maintain an adequately sized grease interceptor trap in accordance with Power and Water specifications. Grease arrestors trap the grease, oil and fats and greatly reduce the discharge of these substances into the sewerage system.

All kitchen fixtures in the food preparation areas such as floor drains, kitchen sinks, dishwashers, cleaner's sinks, and bin wash areas must be connected to the grease arrestor. All grease arrestors must be pumped out by a licensed waste transporter at a minimum of once every three months unless otherwise specified by Power and Water.

Which grease arrestor is right for your business?

Power and Water's Trade Waste Officers can help you work out the most appropriate sized grease arrestor for your business. This will be included as a condition of your Trade Waste

Discharge Permit. The sizing of grease arrestors is generally based on a maximum flow rate of litres per hour, with the seating capacity used as a guide only, as outlined below:

Maximum wastewater discharge volume (litres/hour)	Grease arrestor Required	Restaurant seating capacity
1100	1000 litres	Up to 69
1500	1500 litres	70 - 199
2000	2000litres	200 - 399
3000	3000litres	400 - 599
4000	4000 litres	600 - 799
5000	5000 litres	800 - 999

Maintaining your grease arrestor

Grease arrestors become less effective as oil, grease and sludge accumulate in them. They require regular cleaning to prevent blockages, odour problems and health hazards.

A grease arrestor must be pumped out completely and the internal surfaces scraped and/or hosed off during the pump out operation. This cleans the arrestor of grease, food solids and any other particles that may block the outlet pipe.

Your Trade Waste Discharge Permit will list the specific maintenance requirements for your grease arrestor. It is your responsibility to have the grease arrestor pumped out every three months. Some businesses have their grease arrestor pumped out more regularly to ensure the appropriate measures are met.

Grease arrestors must be cleaned out by a licensed liquid waste transporter. The waste transporter is required to remove the entire contents of the grease trap and dispose of the waste in accordance with the regulatory requirements. You will be charged by the waste transporter for this work.

To find a licensed waste transporter look under Waste Reduction and Disposal Services in your local business directory.

Handy tips to reduce your greasy waste

Here are some useful tips to best manage greasy waste water in your business and potentially save you money:

- Reduce the use of fat, oil and grease.
- Do not pour any oil directly down the drain or into the grease arrestor.
- Scrape or wipe off rather than rinse excess food material or oil and grease from dishes, kitchen utensils and equipment.
- Use quick break detergents.
- Use sink strainers/screens to prevent food solids from going into drains.
- Ensure all grease-bearing drain lines discharge into a grease arrestor.
- Have your grease arrestor pumped out regularly by a licensed waste transporter.
- Train your employees in what they can and cannot put down the sinks and drains. Explain the purpose and function of a grease arrestor.
- Store your used cooking oil in a bunded area so that leaks and spills cannot drain into the sewer or stormwater systems.

For more information about grease arrestors contact a Power and Water Trade Waste Officer by calling 1800 245 092 or visit powerwater.com.au.