

Avoid Brown Friday! How to Properly Dispose of Greasy, Oily Kitchen Leftovers



(Hampton Roads, Va., Nov. 10, 2020) – We don’t want to spoil your holiday dinner, but do you know what happens when you put leftover cooking oil and greasy food scraps down the kitchen drain or disposal? It isn’t pretty, according to Mike Martin, chief of pretreatment and pollution prevention with the [Hampton Roads Sanitation District](#) (HRSD).

“When grease goes down the drain in a liquid form, it will cool and adhere to the sides of the pipes. This reduces the pipe’s diameter and restricts the flow of water,” said Martin. “This can prevent other household waste from moving through the pipe, causing sewage backups in your home or a sanitary sewer overflow in the street.”

No one wants to deal with *that* situation on a family holiday, not even plumbers. Martin says the local plumbing community refers to the day after Thanksgiving as Brown Friday—one of the busiest times for sewage backups. It can be pricey, too. If a backup occurs on a holiday, residents can expect to pay a premium.

“You won’t get as good a plumbing deal on Brown Friday, as you would shopping on Black Friday,” Martin said.

So what do you do? Martin recommends taking a few minutes to dispose of fats, oils and grease (FOG) properly:

- For standing grease, pour it while it’s hot into an empty can, let it harden in the freezer and then toss the can in the trash.
- For grease leftover from foods such as bacon or hamburger, allow it to cool in the pan, then use a paper towel to swipe and toss it in the trash.
- For dishes, scrape any leftovers into the trash or compost bin before washing.
- To dispose of leftover turkey frying oil, [contact your locality](#) for proper disposal. Each has their own FOG control division, and HRSD will provide assistance to these localities on request.

Restaurant owners should adhere to the same guidelines. In addition, they should

maintain and inspect grease control devices, dispose of fryer grease correctly and cover their collection containers.

Not only are sewer overflows and backups an inconvenience for Hampton Roads residents, they impact the environment by contaminating local waterways and harming wildlife and aquatic species. That's a key concern for askHRgreen.org, a public awareness and education initiative backed by 17 Hampton Roads cities and counties and HRSD.

"Keeping your drains FOG-free goes beyond the holiday season," said Rebekah Eastep, an askHRgreen.org team leader. "These are practices we should be following year round. It's really everybody's responsibility to do the right thing."

About askHRgreen.org

askHRgreen.org is your go-to resource for all things green in Hampton Roads – from recycling tips and pointers for keeping local waterways clean to water-saving ideas and simple steps to make local living easy on the environment. Launched in 2011, the region-wide public awareness and education campaign is administered through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and powered by the following members: The cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg; the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry and York; the town of Smithfield; and HRSD. Like askHRgreen.org on [Facebook](#), follow on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), tune in to [YouTube](#) and catch the "Let's Talk Green" [blog](#), written by a team of local experts.

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