



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Public Hearing, Second Reading, and Final Passage of an Ordinance to amend Title 5, Chapter 6 of the City Code to update the existing sewage disposal ordinance related to the discharge of Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) into the sanitary sewer collection system from food service establishments.

ISSUE: Consideration of a proposed ordinance to amend Title 5, Chapter 6 of the City Code to update the existing sewage disposal ordinance related to the discharge of Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) into the sanitary sewer collection system from food service establishments.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council pass the attached proposed ordinance (Attachments 1 and 2) on first reading, and schedule it for public hearing, second reading and final passage on Saturday, October 17, 2020.

DISCUSSION: The introduction and accumulation of fats, oils and grease into the City's sanitary sewer collection system causes and contributes to sanitary sewer blockages, obstructions, and sanitary sewer overflows. Fats, oils, and grease include either liquid or solid kitchen cooking grease or oil, shortening, fat from meats, dairy products oil sauces and other organic polar compounds. A Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Source Control Plan was developed by T&ES in 2019 to reduce the frequency of sanitary sewer overflows and sewer backups as well as reduce city operations and maintenance costs associated with increased FOG within the sanitary sewer collection and treatment systems. Recommendations included initiating educational FOG inspections at food service establishments. Approximately 100 inspections were completed in the fall of 2019. Findings from the FOG inspections indicated that while many food service establishments were in compliance, some of the food service establishments inspected required improvements to adequately address FOG discharges. A second round of FOG inspections scheduled for fall 2020 has been deferred until after COVID-19 risks are mitigated. When inspections do resume, these inspections will resume by first focusing on providing education on how to better manage FOG from the site. Notices of violation and corrective action requirements will only occur after multiple site visits show no improvement in how a food service establishment is managing FOG from their site.

Prior to the 2019 inspections, a FOG public education brochure was prepared and included in letters mailed to all food service establishments in the City. T&ES partnered with the Alexandria Health Department in preparing the public education brochure and identifying food service establishments. Best management practices for fats, oils and grease are listed in the FOG public education brochure (Attachment 3) and include:

- prohibiting pouring or scraping FOG wastes down the drain;
- wiping grease out of pots, pans and plates prior to washing;

- posting “No Grease” signs;
- retaining operation and maintenance records; and
- related training of kitchen staffs.

Many food service establishments are required by the Virginia Plumbing Code to install FOG control devices that include grease traps and interceptors. This generally means that newer food service establishments have installed modern FOG equipment, while older food service establishments may not have up to date FOG equipment. These plumbing devices require consistent maintenance and cleaning to ensure proper operation. Costs for installing grease traps vary from \$1,600 to \$2,400. Costs for installing a grease interceptor are more expensive and can be \$4,000 to \$8,500, or significantly more depending on the size and the site. Additional maintenance costs for cleaning are also necessary for these plumbing devices.

Staff proposes updating the existing ordinance to clarify requirements for addressing FOG discharges from food service establishments to improve compliance with avoiding sanitary sewer overflows and sewer backups in the City’s sanitary sewer collection system. The recommended updates to the existing ordinance include the following:

- Clarify FOG management requirements for both new and existing food service establishments
- Clarify City’s authority to inspect food service establishments with respect to FOG
- Provide minimum maintenance and record keeping requirements related to FOG management
- Provide a compliance schedule for food service establishments related to FOG management requirements
- Clarify civil penalties for non-compliance with FOG management requirements

All food service establishments in the City have been provided with notification by mail of the proposed ordinance to amend the City Code. Additional information, including FAQs, have been provided on the City’s website.

FISCAL IMPACT: The City already has in place a program to inspect food service establishments for FOG. There is no additional fiscal impact.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 - Ordinance Cover
Attachment 2 - Ordinance
Attachment 3 - FOG Brochure
Attachment 4 - Presentation

STAFF:

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