

Can it, scrap it, or trash it

Tips on properly disposing grease, cooking oils

By Cameron Macdonald
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The holidays are almost here, and I already foresee two gigantic piles of dirty pans, pots, and dishes in my kitchen sink. I can also see the leftovers, not the kind that stays in Tupperware containers that are shoved into the freezer, but rather the inedible kind.

There are the bacon grease and the bounties of filthy, deep-fried oils that makes nuclear waste look gourmet.

When the question of disposing the grease or the oil comes into play, unfortunately many on KP Duty tend to go for the easy way out: dump the wastes into the kitchen sink's garbage disposal.

If you multiply that action by hundreds of thousands of households across Sacramento County, you'll have a massive amount of gunk that backs up the sewer system. The Sacramento Area Sewer District alone spends more than \$3 million a year in unclogging that backup, district spokesperson Evans Mends said.

"(The backup) increases 50 percent during the holidays," he said.

Mends mentioned that disposing the wastes into the sink can also heavily damage home plumbing since the liquids can harden into solids and block the pipes.

London's sewer system made international headlines this summer when "Fatberg" or a 15-ton blockage of disposed grease and cooking oil clogged up the city's sewers and prevented many toilets from flushing.



Photos by Laura Bemis

Sewer district officials say that oils and greases can greatly damage sewer systems if disposed in a sink.

Video images of the beast that's reportedly the size of three blue whales brought to mind the grotesque "ectoplasm" featured in the "Ghostbusters" movies.

Let's not create Fatberg's Elk Grove cousin.

Mends said that his district's simple tips for disposing the wastes are: "Can it,

scrap it, and trash it."

Once the oils or greases cool down in the pan, scrape or pour it into a steady container such as a coffee can, and throw it away in the garbage, he said. Glass containers such as jars are fine as long as the wastes are cooled, he said.

Let's say that you've tried a "Fish &

Chips for 20" recipe and you're left with a bounty of oil in your pan or deep-fryer. One way of disposing a large amount of oil is to place it into a jug and drop it off at the Sacramento Recycling & Transfer Station at 8491 Fruitridge Road.

For more information on the station, call (916) 875-5555.