



City of Largo, Florida

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MEMO DATE: September 21, 2007

AGENDA DATE: September 25, 2007 – Work Session

PREPARED BY: Irvin Kety, Environmental Services Director
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TITLE: **GREASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE**

INTRODUCTION:

The City of Largo has long understood the havoc that viscous substances can cause in the sanitary sewer system. When oil, grease and food solids that are discharged into the sanitary sewer by restaurants, cafeterias, commercial garages, and residential households, the immiscible materials accumulate in the sewer lines, eventually blocking the flow. Through the years, blockages have attributed to numerous unauthorized sanitary sewer overflows to the environment, costly back-ups into homes and restaurants, and countless hours of City labor.

Since 1985, the City has regulated the discharges from commercial users by requiring the installation and maintenance of a grease interceptor device. In contrast, the City's ability to regulate the discharge of oil and grease from individual homes has been limited. The City has traditionally taken a reactive approach to domestic grease problems through sanitary sewer line maintenance activities and emergency repairs. However, with improved video inspection technology and the regulation of Privately-owned Collection and Transmission Systems, the City has shifted to a proactive approach to domestic grease.

BACKGROUND:

Largo City Code Chapter 22, Division 4 entitled "Industrial Pretreatment Program", provides for the regulation of commercial and industrial discharges to the wastewater reclamation facility (WWRF). The Industrial Pretreatment Program, established in October 1985, was charged with the responsibility of protecting the health and safety of workers, protecting the WWRF, and protecting the environment by regulating discharges to the publicly-owned WWRF. Industries were not the only sanitary sewer users with the potential of discharging prohibited materials, therefore the original program also included the regulation of commercial users. In accordance with City Ordinance, restaurants and food service facilities were required to clean grease interceptors a minimum of one time per month. This requirement was unique in the area and demonstrated a proactive approach to controlling grease problems in the collection system.

Compliance among commercial users significantly improved in June of 1997 with the establishment of permit requirements and enforcement fees for grease interceptors and oil/water separators, as implemented by Ordinance 97-27. Prior to this ordinance, grease interceptors were inspected three or four times per year to insure compliance with the mandatory cleaning frequency, but no permits were issued and the cost of the inspection program was absorbed by the Sewer Fund. In 1997, the grease interceptor permit fee was set at \$100 per year, and has remained consistent to this date.

Within the past five years the effectiveness of the Commercial User Program has been enhanced by consistent enforcement of the inground interceptor requirement for all food service facilities. Per City Ordinance, all new facilities, including new construction, establishments under new ownership, or those buildings which required structural renovations, must install an inground interceptor in accordance with Florida Plumbing Code requirements. Facilities must also submit a quarterly "Documentation of Service" form to verify regular maintenance of their interceptor device.

With the maturity of the Privately-owned Collection and Transmission System Program, personnel have extended their focus to grease problems within the private systems. In the event that grease accumulation is identified during an inspection of the system, owners are required to clean the prohibited substance from the pump station or gravity lines. Educational materials detailing the proper disposal of cooking grease are also distributed to those residents suspected of discharging grease into the sanitary sewer.

The well established Commercial User Program effectively regulates commercial and institutional food service facilities and garages. Inspection and regulation of individual households is not economically feasible due to the number of staff that would be required to manage such a program. A reduction in grease problems among privately-owned collection and transmission systems in which information regarding proper grease disposal is already provided, indicate that educational activities may have a positive impact.

It is the intent of the Department of Environmental Services to expand grease management education to the entire Largo Community. Initially, informational broadcasts, newspaper articles, posters, brochures, and community events will be used to increase public awareness about the problems created when cooking grease and petroleum products are disposed of improperly. Additionally, information will be provided concerning proper disposal methods and the availability of recycle collection sites.

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET BACKGROUND:

Not Applicable

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

Food Service facilities and commercial garages are billed for annual permit fees in accordance with the City of Largo Ordinances 2001-60. The annual permit fees collected from the 243 food service facilities and 35 commercial garages, represent a total revenue of \$37,800. These funds finance the Department's personnel and operating costs necessary to ensure compliance. Table-1 identifies the total annual budgetary impact for the permit fees.

Table - 1. Annual Permit Fees from Food Service Facilities and Garages

Permit Type	In-ground Grease Interceptor	Under-sink Interceptor	Oil/Water Separator	TOTAL ANNUAL PERMIT FEES
Annual Permit Fee	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	
Number of Permits	265	78	35	
Total Fees	\$26,500.00	\$7,800.00	\$3,500.00	\$37,800.00

The annual budgetary impact for the City to continue to take a reactionary approach to the residential-related grease problem is approximately \$250,500. The Department's personnel costs would be equally as high if the City chose to implement an inspection program for individual households. In contrast, educating the public as to the options available to properly dispose of cooking grease and petroleum products would cost approximately \$5,000 annually. Furthermore, the establishment of a collection site for the recycling of cooking grease would be provided at no cost to the City by a local grease receiving company.

CONSEQUENT ACTION:

Not Applicable

REVIEWED BY AND RECOMMENDATION:

The City Manager, City Attorney, Assistant City Managers, Environmental Services Director and Environmental Manager recommend that the City of Largo expand public awareness about proper grease management and offer a collection site for those residents interested in recycling.

COMMISSION DIRECTION REQUESTED:

This document has been prepared as a Staff Report, and therefore requires no Commission action.