

Never send cooking oils, fats, or greases down the drain. Even small amounts can cause problems in your home plumbing or further down the sewer line.



Just in time for the holidays, Thurston County in cooperation with the LOTT Alliance is launching a new service to residential customers. Beginning November 1, 2006, residents can recycle used cooking oil at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center in Lacey.



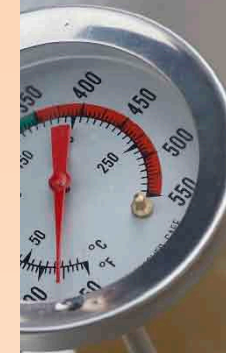
The Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center (formerly known as the Hawks Prairie Landfill) is located at 2418 Hogum Bay Road NE in Lacey. From I-5, take Exit 111, head north on Marvin Road, and turn east onto Hogum Bay Road NE. The facility entrance is on the right.

For additional information, please call Thurston County Environmental Health at (360) 754-4111.



The Skinny on Turkey Frying Oil

...and Other Holiday Leftovers



Thinking of deep frying a turkey for the holidays?

Holiday meals are delicious, but leftover cooking oils, fats, and greases can cause trouble if not disposed of properly.

Read on to learn what to do with your leftover cooking oil or pan drippings...

Why not just pour the oil down the drain?

Cooking oils, fats, and greases can coat and clog pipes and cause your sewer line to back up into your home, resulting in expensive clean up and repair costs. Fats, oils, and greases can also cause problems further down the sewer line, causing overflow or backup of sewage into streets, creating a public health risk. Even if the bulk of the oil makes it to the wastewater treatment plant, this influx of oil can disrupt the treatment process and cause equipment problems. If you are on a septic system, cooking oils can clog your pipes or drainfield, leading to failure and costly repairs. To prevent any or all of these problems, dispose of your leftover cooking oils, fats, and greases properly.

What if I use my garbage disposal, hot water and detergent?

These methods won't prevent grease from building up in household pipes and sewer lines. Home garbage disposals do not remove grease from the plumbing system. Hot water will cool down in pipes causing fats and grease to coagulate, coating and clogging pipes. Detergents that claim to dissolve grease may cause blockages to occur further down the pipeline.

What counts as fats, oils, and greases?

Fats, oils and greases are naturally separated during cooking and baking and they are used to cook or fry many foods. Common sources include: cooking oil, meat fats, lard, shortening, butter, dairy products, margarine, fatty/greasy food scraps, sauces, and salad dressing. None of these items should be put down the drain.

What should I do with my used cooking oil?

The easiest way to solve the grease problem and help prevent blockages and overflows of raw sewage is to keep this material out of the sewer or septic system in the first place. There are several ways to do this.

Use cooking oil more than once. Consider deep frying two turkeys (or more) with one batch of oil. Cooking oil can be used for up to six hours of straight frying time if the temperature is monitored closely.

As a general rule of thumb, don't let cooking oil top 375 degrees; excessive heat will cause oil to break down and turn rancid. If the oil begins to smoke, it's getting too hot and needs to be turned down immediately. The oil's smoke point (the temperature at which the oil begins to smoke) and flash point (the temperature at which the oil ignites) will depend on the type of oil used.

See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/smoke_point for more information about smoke points of various cooking oils.

Consider saving oil from the deep fryer to reuse it another day. The used oil should be cooled completely and strained through a coffee filter or cheese cloth to remove any sediment, seasonings, or other material before returning it to its original, airtight container. Store the oil in a cool, dark, dry place for up to six months.



Dispose of small amounts in the garbage.

Collect cooled oils, fats, and greases in small, sturdy, disposable containers and discard it with your trash.

Recycle large quantities of used cooking oil at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center.

The center is located at 2418 Hogum Bay Road NE in Lacey (see map on the back). Self-service used oil receptacles are located toward the back of the recycling area, near HazoHouse. Simply pour your oil into the container marked for used cooking oil. This service is available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. The facility is closed on New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Used cooking oil collected at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center is hauled away by Arcom Oil and is refined and recycled into new fluids.

Cooking oil should not be dumped in storm drains either. Oil and grease poured into a storm drain will make its way into local creeks and rivers, and ultimately Puget Sound, impacting fish and wildlife, as well as the environment. If that's not reason enough, remember that dumping any pollutant into storm drains is illegal.