

NEW GENERAL PERMIT FOR FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

The Department of Environmental Protection has issued a General Permit regulating fats, oils and greases in wastewater discharges from Class III and Class IV food service establishments. The General Permit applies only to establishments that discharge to a sanitary sewer, not to those using subsurface septic systems.

The permit does not require registration with the DEP, but directs establishment owners to contact the local WPCA or building official to determine their compliance. These local agents will advise the owner on permit requirements and compliance times.

The new permit addresses the problem of fats, oils and greases discharged into municipal sewers. These discharges have been responsible for pump station and pipe blockages, resulting raw sewage overflows to rivers and streams. A public hearing on the permit was held on December 1, 2004 at the DEP, and the regulation was issued in September, 2005.

All establishments classified as Class III or Class IV in the Public Health Code are required to install either a 1,000 gallon (minimum) outside grease interceptor, or an automatic grease recovery unit (AGRU). Quarterly inspections and pumpouts of the components are required, and the recovered FOG must be disposed of at a regional collection/transfer site.

Existing establishments have until July 1, 2011 to comply with the new regulations. New establishments, or those which undergo renovation or change of ownership, must comply immediately. Facilities in areas which are designated by the municipality as a problem area for sewer compliance may also be required to upgrade immediately. The WPCA or building official may grant a waiver of these requirements in certain circumstances, as specified in the permit.

Health Department personnel are not required to be involved in the general permit process or in compliance issues. Required food service inspections do not include oversight of permit requirements, although if there is an obvious public health nuisance, it should be reported to the proper authority. Local WPCA's may contract individually with health departments or districts for other services in regard to permit enforcement.

The complete text of the general permit may be found at the DEP website (www.dep.state.ct.us), and a guidance document has been sent to municipal water pollution authorities. Questions regarding the general permit may be addressed to Joseph Nestico at the Bureau of Water Management, Municipal Facilities Section, CT DEP, 860-424-3755.