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Frequently Asked Questions about Grease Trap Testing

Why do I have to have my grease trap tested?

The Palm Beach County Utilities Department (PBCWUD) has implemented the Wastewater Pretreatment Program for Palm Beach County based on State and Federal mandates, and they can best answer this question. Helpful websites: www.pbcwater.com and www.wpb.org/utilities/info.html

What tests do I need and how often do I have to have them done?

The tests your facility may need to have performed and the frequency are determined by the PBCWUD. You will receive a letter from the PBCWUD outlining your responsibilities. The tests most often required include BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand), TSS (Total Suspended Solids), and OG (Oil & Grease).

Is this a free service since it is required by the County?

No. We are not affiliated with any governmental agency. Our rates are competitive with other private testing laboratories in the area. Please contact us for a current quotation.

What are the current limits for the each test?

The limit for BOD is 400 mg/L, the limit for TSS is 400 mg/L, and the limit for OG is 100 mg/L.

*mg/L = is a unit of measure meaning milligrams per liter (also expressed as mg/l).

*Note that the limits listed on your letter may be different than those listed above.

What do these tests measure?

The 3 tests required by the PBCWUD are all different ways to measure of the organic matter that goes into the grease trap. Organic matter in this sense pertains to organic chemistry, and refers to carbon-based compounds and their derivatives. What this means for you is that all food and drink wastes that may go down the drains in your kitchen or facility will impact your test results. Organic matter may also refer to some cleaning agents or detergents. You may find further clarification from the PBCWUD, the library or the internet.

Will you make specific recommendations about cleaning agents to avoid or foods/drinks to avoid?

No. There are, as of yet, no quick or easy solutions to solving test results that are over the limits. The best thing you can do is contact the PBCWUD to discuss Best Management Practices (BMP).

Is it possible to have our trap sampled at a specific time? Otherwise, our kitchen operations are severely disrupted.

We understand that many managers and business owners need to have efficient operations; however, we cannot guarantee specific grease trap sampling times because this type of sampling is unpredictable. Following BMP is the best way to manage and even improve your test results.

I just had my grease trap cleaned/pumped and then tested, why are the results for my facility still over the PBCWUD limits?

Having the grease trap pumped and cleaned does not guarantee a passing test result. Numerous factors impact grease trap test results. Food and drink wastes, cleaning agents, water usage, grease trap cleaning frequency, and other factors may have an impact on test results. IMPORTANT: The PBCWUD is your best resource for understanding what is expected of business owners and facility managers, as well as the BMP you can implement to improve your test results.

How do I improve my grease trap test results?

BMP are a vital component for improving grease trap test results. The PBCWUD is your best resource for further answers to this question.

Do you offer a guarantee for passing results?

No. We are a State-certified professional testing laboratory with over 40 years' experience. It would be impossible to guarantee passing results. We cannot predict how a test will turn out until that test has been completed.

Will you submit my report to the PBCWUD on my behalf?

No. You are our client. You will receive your final report via mail, email or fax (this is set up once you become a client), and then you are required to submit the report to the PBCWUD directly.

Do I still have to submit my report to the PBCWUD when some or all of my test results are over the limit?

We recommend that all of our clients first call the PBCWUD before they submit any report that has test results that are over the limit.

How far in advance do I have to schedule with you to have samples taken at my restaurant/facility?

We schedule sampling of grease traps every Tuesday-Thursday (except holidays). Other days may be available. Generally, we require at least 24 hours notice, but please note that some weeks are busier than others and the schedule may fill up quickly. Please call us as soon as you know that you need to have this testing done.

I need my report right away / on a certain date, is this possible?

Emergencies are a part of our business, and we will always work with you to complete your project in a timely manner. Please note that of the three tests usually performed on a grease trap, the BOD test will take no less than 5-7 days to complete and is therefore ineligible for rush processing. Rush charges will apply for the O/G or TSS tests if you require rapid turnaround. If you need your report on a specific date, you must notify us in when you schedule the tests.

I want to have my grease trap pumped/cleaned the same day that you come out to take a sample, is this okay?

We do not recommend this. The grease trap cleaning company you use will empty the grease trap at your facility. It usually takes at least 24-48 hours for the grease trap to fill back up again depending on various factors (size of grease trap, volume of water used, etc.). Some facilities need a week or so before the grease trap is sufficiently filled. **IMPORTANT:** We are not permitted to collect samples from grease traps that are empty or partially-filled. Do not even ask us to do this. If we arrive at your location and the grease trap is **NOT** completely filled (and discharging) we will not collect any samples and you will be invoiced an additional travel charge for the visit.

Will you schedule the grease trap at my facility to be pumped?

No. Our primary responsibility to our clients is to provide them with professional testing services.

If your question is not answered in this FAQ, do not hesitate to give us a call or send us an email. Everglades Laboratories, Inc. is committed to providing our clients with the best in customer service. We look forward to working with you on your next testing project.