

Our view on the positioning of dishwashers in relation to grease separation/removal equipment: Connect upstream or downstream?

When it comes to the use of our wastewater infrastructure Water Companies follow the principle that “Sewers are for Sewage”. To this end Food Service Establishments are requested to follow kitchen best practices and, where appropriate, install and maintain an adequately sized grease management system.

Fats, Oils and Greases (FOG) are a common cause of sewer blockages and are a significant contributor to the approximate 300000 sewer blockages occurring each year. Additionally FOG will be a significant contributor to the thousands of private drain blockages that customers are responsible for having cleared themselves.

Dishwashers are commonly used in many commercial kitchens for cleaning and sanitising cutlery, crockery and cookware. There is a risk however that their operation means dishwashers will allow food waste and FOG to enter the drain. Due to the nature of the discharge from dishwashers, ideally, they should be connected to a grease management system that is correctly sized to accommodate the volume and temperature of the discharge.

Dishwashers can be employed for two main functions:

- a sterilising/sanitising unit or
- a wash and sanitising unit

If the dishwasher is being used primarily as a sterilising unit it is essential that kitchen best practice is followed and all plates, pots, trays and utensils should be thoroughly scraped and dry-wiped with disposable kitchen towel or with a suitable utensil before they are put in the dishwasher to stop food waste and fats/oils/grease entering the dishwasher. In such cases it may be appropriate for the dishwasher discharge to occur beyond (downstream of) the grease management system. Even so, however, there is still a risk that FOG and food waste could enter the sewer.

If the dishwasher is being used primarily as a washing unit with no or limited pre-cleansing of crockery, utensils etc. then discharges from the appliance must pass through a grease management system. In such circumstances the grease management system should be appropriately sized in terms of the volume and temperature of discharges.

It is the preference of UK water companies that dishwashers are located downstream of a grease management system where the dishwasher is being used primarily as a sterilising unit and kitchen best practice, as detailed above, is rigorously followed.

Where a dishwasher is being used primarily as a washing unit with limited or no pre-cleansing of crockery, utensils etc. then discharges from the appliance must pass through an appropriately specified grease management system.