

Recycle your Used Cooking Oil



Thurston County, in cooperation with LOTT Clean Water Alliance, is pleased to offer used cooking oil recycling at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center (WARC) in Hawks Prairie. To recycle your used cooking oil, take it to the self-service blue bin recycle area during regular WARC business hours. Pour your oil into the cooking oil tank. Businesses that generate small amounts (less than five gallons per week) of frying oil can also use this disposal option.

Can't I pour oil down the drain?

Fats, oils and grease (FOG) are a leading cause of sewer backups into homes connected to the sanitary sewer system. Even small amounts of fats, oils or greases, over time, can clog pipes, resulting in sewer or septic back-ups. The average cost of repair resulting from a back-up is roughly \$3,000, which does not include the cost of replacing affected flooring and walls. If you don't want to pour your money down the drain, avoid letting oils and grease make their way down the drain.



If you are on a septic system, keep in mind that your system is designed to separate solids from wastewater and to store and partially decompose as much solid material as possible, while allowing liquids (or effluent) to flow to the drainfield. Cooking oils cannot decompose in the tank and, if they leave the tank, can clog your drainfield, leading to failure and costly repairs.



Storm drains are not an option either. Cooking oil dumped into a storm drain will make its way into local creeks, 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.

Can't I use my garbage disposal, hot water and detergent?

Don't rely on hot water, detergent or your garbage disposal to get rid of the oil. Garbage disposals simply grind up food, not liquids. Hot water and detergents may get the oils to clear your pipes, but can cause blockages further down the line. Clogs can cause food and sewage to back-up, sending sewage into our streets and yards, creating a public health risk.





What should I do with my used cooking oil?

Use your oil more than once. Consider cooking two birds (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; that's long enough to cook seven or eight turkeys consecutively.



As a general rule of thumb, don't let your oil top 375 degrees; excessive heat will cause your oil to break down and turn rancid. If your oil begins to smoke, it's getting too hot and you need to turn it down. 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.



If you plan on using your oil more than once, it should be cooled completely and strained through a coffee filter or cheese cloth to remove any sediment, seasonings, or other material. Large quantities can be returned to its original, airtight container, while smaller amounts can be placed in a jar. Store the oil in a cool, dark, dry place for up to six months.



Recycle used cooking oil at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center (WARC) at 2418 Hogum Bay Road NE in Lacey. Used cooking oils should be strained to remove large solids from the liquid before offering it for recycling. Carefully pour cooking oil in the tank labeled "Used Cooking Oil." This service is available during regular WARC business hours. The facility is closed on New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

Recycle only as much as you can transport safely. Please make sure to pour used cooking oil in the correct tank—not in one of the used motor oil collection tanks. Also, pour only cooking oil in the tank—other liquids contaminate the cooking oil and it can no longer be recycled.

Where does used cooking oil go?

Used cooking oil taken the WARC is collected by General Biodiesel, who transports the oil to their Seattle facility, where it is refined and recycled into biodiesel. General Biodiesel fuels are sold and distributed regionally.

For additional information, please call Thurston County Environmental Health at (360) 867-2664.

