

Local Government Guide for Setting up a Used Cooking Oil Recycling Program

Used cooking oil and grease generated by homeowners often end up down the kitchen drain where they can solidify and contribute to sewer line blockages. These blockages can result in millions of gallons of untreated wastewater reaching nearby rivers. To prevent this, several local governments in North Carolina have undertaken programs to provide public cooking oil and grease collections. Developing and implementing a collection program by following these steps:

1. Determine the type of collection method that would be most efficient for your program needs. Speak with other local governments that have cooking oil collection programs to see how they approached setting up their programs, so that there is no need to “reinvent the wheel.” Some things to consider:
 - a. If you are establishing a collection at your landfill or waste convenience sites, decide what types of containers would be best for your collection. Some local governments use 55-gallon drums, some use special totes provided by their contract haulers and others ask consumers to bring the oil in gallon jugs and drop them off at the collection sites so employees can bulk the oil at a central collection site.
 - b. Municipalities may be able to provide curbside pick-up for household-generated cooking oil – Raleigh and Cary have successful programs collecting oil curbside.
 - c. Remember that when you establish collection areas, proper signage is ESSENTIAL. Erect a sign describing the program and give specific “how-to” instructions. Clearly mark cooking oil collection containers and if necessary, have site attendants available to assist consumers in proper handling of the oil.
 - d. Consider processing the oil you collect for use in your own vehicles. Gaston County is doing this successfully.
2. Locate a commercial hauler for collected waste cooking oil
 - a. Compare the services available in your area and select the hauler that is best for your needs. Many will provide collection containers for your program.
 - b. Since cooking oil has value as a component of biodiesel fuel, you should negotiate a price the hauler will pay you for the oil collected.
3. Depending on the number of households bringing waste cooking oil to your collection sites, you will need to decide how many containers should be placed at each site and how

often to have those containers serviced. The best rule is to start small and expand the program as you see how much oil is generated over time.

4. Promote and Educate. Use every method available to you to educate the public about the need to recycle cooking oil and how to do it correctly. Some helpful methods you can use to promote and educate include:
 - a. Place ads in local newspapers and publications. Some publications will allow you to place public service fillers between news items and ads.
 - b. Place notices about your program on your local government website.
 - c. Print reminders on outgoing water billing and other communications to the public.
 - d. Place public service announcements about your cooking oil collection program on local radio stations. Those PSAs are usually free.
 - e. Contact your local media and send them press releases about the program.
 - f. Print fliers, brochures or information cards about the program and distribute them to consumers at your collection sites.