

This document is intended to assist potential commercial property buyers in determining whether there is an existing grease interceptor (GI) on site and, if so, guiding how to evaluate the pretreatment device's age, size, condition, and general maintenance requirements.

## WHAT IS A GREASE INTERCEPTOR?

A GI is a large tank designed to capture and separate fats, oils, and grease (FOG) from kitchen wastewater. While GIs are most commonly installed outside of a building, they can also be located indoors. Their sizes range from 100 gallons to over 5,000 gallons and they function by allowing FOG to float to the top while the relatively clean/clear wastewater flows through to the sanitary sewer.

## HOW TO KNOW IF THERE IS A GI ON THE PROPERTY?

Options to determine if a GI is located on the property include:

- Submit a Public Information Request (PIR) for information about underground storage tanks, Site Plan documents and Building Plan documents. For the City of Austin, PIRs can be submitted online at <http://www.austintexas.gov/pir>.
- If the building was previously used as a restaurant, it is likely a GI is already installed. To check, walk the property to see if you're able to locate two manhole covers positioned in series near the building, as shown in the picture to the right. This may indicate the presence of a GI. For confirmation, consult with a licensed Surveyor, Engineer, or Plumber.



## HOW TO GET INFORMATION ON THE AGE, SIZE, AND CONDITION OF THE GI?

Submitting a PIR (see above) and requesting information about underground storage tanks, including any Site Plans, Building Plans, Industrial Waste (IW) Approval Letters, inspection reports and/or plumbing permits can help provide any known information on the GI.

The condition of a GI can be evaluated by conducting an inspection. Customers must coordinate a date/time that works with a COA permitted Liquid Waste Hauler (LWH) and IW staff to schedule a **mutually agreed upon time** to service the GI. An IW staff member must be present at the time of service to perform the inspection while the GI is empty. To schedule an inspection with IW staff, please email [IndustrialWaste@austintexas.gov](mailto:IndustrialWaste@austintexas.gov). IW staff will respond back within 24-hours.

## WHY MIGHT THE GI NEED TO BE REPLACED?

The average lifespan of a GI is 15-20 years, but this range can be influenced by whether or not the GI was serviced and maintained as per Code requirements. Aside from structural deterioration, a GI may need to be replaced if:

- The existing GI capacity is not sufficient for future planned food operations/kitchen fixture upgrades.
- A prior variance granted by IW is no longer applicable.
- The existing GI no longer meets COA [sizing](#) or [design](#) specifications.

If a GI needs to be replaced, refer to the "Grease Traps/Grease Interceptors" box at:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/industrial-waste-plan-review-pretreatment-plan-review>.

## WHAT ARE THE CUSTOMER MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR A GI?

FOG and solids accumulation within the GI must be pumped out by a licensed LWH at least every 90 days or sooner per Austin City Code § [15-10-197](#).

- LWH information: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/liquid-waste-hauler-program>
- Manifest records must be kept and stored on-site for 3 years and be made accessible to IW personnel for inspections or other requests. A copy of the manifest will be provided to you by the LWH after each pump-out.
- For additional information, reference [Grease Interceptor Overview & Customer Responsibilities](#).

## QUESTIONS?

- Email:** [IndustrialWaste@austintexas.gov](mailto:IndustrialWaste@austintexas.gov)
- Online:** <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/industrial-waste-control-pretreatment>

