



KEEP GREASE OUT OF THE SYSTEM

# OIL-WATER SEPARATOR (OWS) FACT SHEET

## WHAT IS AN OIL-WATER SEPARATOR?

One design is a standard baffle type oil-water separator. This is a large-capacity, underground vault (Figure 1), and is installed in-between a drain and the connecting sewer pipe. These vaults are designed with weirs and baffles to trap sediments and retain floating oils. The large capacity of the vaults slows down the wastewater, allowing oil to float to the surface, and solid materials to settle out.

Another design type is the coalescing plate separator (CPS). This device use a series of oil-attracting plates (Figure 2), that are designed with weirs and baffles, to trap sediments and retain floating oils.

## WHO NEEDS OIL-WATER SEPARATORS?

Any business that plans to discharge oily or sediment-laden wastewater to the sewer must install, use, and maintain an oil-water separator\*.

Businesses that typically need oil-water separators include:

- ◆ Quick-lube stations
- ◆ Transportation fueling facilities
- ◆ Vehicle/heavy equipment repair
- ◆ Businesses using steam/pressure washers
- ◆ Car washes

## WHAT ARE THE MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN OWS?

- ◆ Maintenance must be performed by a company that specializes in OWS servicing, collection, and disposal.
- ◆ 3 years of maintenance records must be on-site and available upon request.
- ◆ A CPS must be thoroughly cleaned by rinsing and flushing with no visible oil depth on the water.
- ◆ OWS must be serviced per manufacturer specifications or when one of the following occur:
  - » When there is  $\geq 6$  inches of sediment
  - » When there is  $\geq 1$  inch of oil
  - » When accumulated trash or debris is observed

**Baffle Type Separator\***

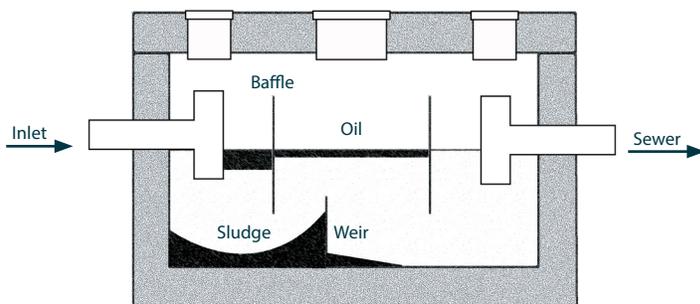


Figure 1

**Coalescing Plate Separator (CPS)\***

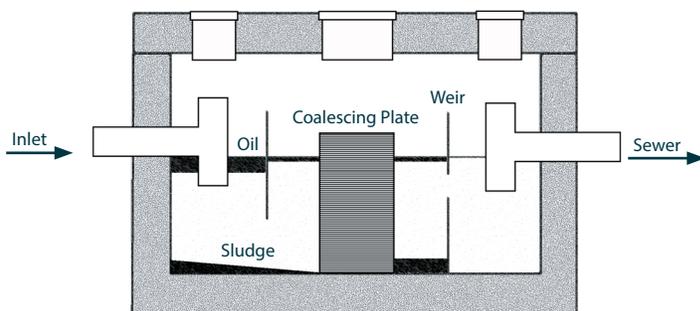


Figure 2

For information on the OWS permitting process, please review the "Oil-water Separator (OWS) Permitting Checklist" that can be found on the website at the bottom of the page.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:**

**WWW.SPOKANECOUNTY.ORG/FOG OR CALL US AT (509) 477-7579**



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## PROHIBITED ITEMS WHEN DISCHARGING INTO AN OWS

- ◇ Anti-freeze, degreasers, and detergents will emulsify oil into small droplets and the oil will not float to the surface
- ◇ Fuels, alcohols, or solvents can cause oils to emulsify, and accumulated vapors can create safety hazards
- ◇ Concentrated amounts of any oily substance can quickly overload the OWS and pass through to the sewer
- ◇ Heavy metal-bearing wastewater:
  - » Hot tank and cabinet washer solutions from auto repair or machine shops
  - » Any metal finishing, plating, or metal recovery waters
  - » Water-soluble machine coolant



## BUSINESSES SHOULD NEVER USE A SEPTIC TANK COMPANY TO CLEAN THEIR OIL-WATER SEPARATOR

- ◇ Disposal of oil-water separator wastewater is not allowed at any wastewater treatment facility in Spokane County.
- ◇ Water removed during cleaning shall not be returned to the oil-water separator.



## IF YOUR BUSINESS PLANS ON DISCHARGING HEAVY METAL-BEARING WASTEWATER

- ◇ Wastewater containing heavy metal-bearing solids may require additional pretreatment and permitting.

For more information on requirements for the Spokane County Industrial Pretreatment Program (IPP), please visit the website below, and feel free to contact us for any further questions:

[www.spokanecounty.org/IPP](http://www.spokanecounty.org/IPP)



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