

Food Waste Disposers Roger Griffith, VP Legislation

Solids in the discharge from a food waste disposer can easily stop up a grease trap or grease interceptor. When a commercial kitchen has a food waste disposer, what is the proper method for connecting the drain to the sanitary sewer system? Should the discharge be routed through the grease interceptor, or should it connect directly to the sanitary system? Should the discharge piping be connected directly to the drain system, or should it have an indirect connection at a floor sink with an air gap?

The 1997 Standard Plumbing Code states that “when the discharge of a food waste grinder is routed to the grease interceptor, the grease interceptor must be sized to accommodate the discharge from the garbage disposer”. This means that *by code* it is permissible for the food waste disposer to discharge to the grease interceptor, if properly designed.

What is the proper way to design a grease interceptor to include the discharge from a garbage disposer? One method is to locate a solids interceptor upstream of the grease interceptor. This prevents solids from entering the grease interceptor and allows the size of the grease interceptor to remain unchanged. Another option is to contact the manufacturer of the grease interceptor to get their sizing requirements when a food waste grinder is present.

The food waste disposer is located on the dirty dish table near the dish machine. Since the water at this sink will not be in contact with food prepared for eating, the discharge does not have to be by an indirect connection. Also, if the disposer discharges to a floor sink, the solids will often clog the strainer and create unsightly as well as nuisance blockages and spillages at the floor sink. For these reasons the disposer should be hard piped to the sanitary system.

Local jurisdictions have varying requirements on handling the discharge from food waste disposers. Recently, on two of our projects that had food waste grinders, the local authorities had completely different requirements. It pays to check with the plans reviewer, as well as the water purveyor, during the design phase of the project. Many times one authority or both will have local standards that must be adhered to.