

**North Carolina**  
**Department of Environment and Natural Resources**

**Division of Waste Management**

**Michael F. Easley, Governor**  
**William G. Ross Jr., Secretary**  
**Dexter R. Matthews, Director**



**NC Laws and Rules Addressing the Management of Grease**

Recently we have received many questions regarding whether the owner or operator of a restaurant or other food service operation can manage the grease generated at a facility by pumping, transporting, storing, treating or disposing of it. The short answer to that question is that they cannot, unless they obtain a permit to operate a Septage Management Firm from the North Carolina Division of Waste Management.

The North Carolina Division of Waste Management regulates the collection, storage, transport and disposal of solid waste. Solid waste includes septage, which in turn includes grease. See N.C. Gen. Stat. §130A-290(32). Grease is defined as "material pumped from grease interceptors, separators, traps, or other appurtenances used for the purpose of removing cooking oils, fats, grease, and food debris from the waste flow generated from food handling, preparation, and cleanup." N.C. Gen. Stat. § 130A-290(32).

Septage Management Rule 15A N.C. Admin. Code 13B .0817(a) states that "[n]o person shall operate a Septage Management Firm without first obtaining a permit from the Division as required under G.S. 130A-291.1(c)." A septage management firm is a person "engaged in ... pumping, transporting, storing, treating or disposing septage." N.C. Gen. Stat. §130A-290. Under 15A N.C. Admin. Code 13B .0817(b), "[t]he permit requirement of GS 130A-291.1(c) applies to persons who manage septage generated from properties which they own, lease or manage as part of a business, including but not limited to mobile homes, mobile home parks, and other residential and commercial property."

Based on these laws, the restaurant operator or owner who not only generates grease, as defined in N.C. Gen. Stat. §130A-290(32), but who also manages the grease by pumping, transporting, storing, treating or disposing of it themselves, must obtain a permit. Failure to obtain a permit may subject a violator to civil penalties or other legal action.

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**Restaurants, Grease and Permits: A Summary of NC Statutes**

A number of food service and restaurant owners and operators have recently requested permission to manage the grease they generate at their facility. By "management" we refer to the need to pump, transport, store, treat or dispose of the grease. By bringing this task "in-house" the requestors hope to cut overhead and maintain more control over their operations. While the NC Division of Waste Management finds these worthy goals, the law requires anyone who manages these materials to first obtain a permit.

To see if these laws apply to you, read on.

**What, exactly, is "grease"?**

Grease is defined as "material pumped from grease interceptors, separators, traps, or other appurtenances used for the purpose of removing cooking oils, fats, grease, and food debris from the waste flow generated from food handling, preparation, and cleanup." N.C. Gen. Stat. § 130A-290(32).

**Is grease considered "waste"?**

Solid waste includes septage, which in turn includes grease. See N.C. Gen. Stat. §130A-290(32).

**Who can manage grease?**

A septage management firm is a person "engaged in ...pumping, transporting, storing, treating or disposing septage." N.C. Gen. Stat. §130A-290. Septage Management Rule 15A N.C. Admin. Code 13B .0817(a) states that "[n]o person shall operate a Septage Management Firm without first obtaining a permit from the Division as required under G.S. 130A-291.1(c)." The North Carolina Division of Waste Management regulates the collection, storage, transport and disposal of solid waste.

**But I own a restaurant. Does this law apply to me?**

Under 15A N.C. Admin. Code 13B .0817(b), "[t]he permit requirement of GS 130A-291.1(c) applies to persons who manage septage generated from properties which they own, lease or manage as part of a business, including but not limited to mobile homes, mobile home parks, and other residential and commercial property."

**So what are my options?**

Based on the laws, restaurant operators or owners who not only generate grease (as defined in N.C. Gen. Stat. §130A-290(32), but also try to manage it by pumping, transporting, storing, treating or disposing of it themselves, must obtain a permit. Failure to obtain a permit may subject a violator to civil penalties or other legal action.

**How do I get a permit?**

Contact the DWM's Composting and Land Application Branch at 919.733.0692, ext. 264. They'll be happy to explain the permitting process and answer your questions.