

AWARDED CONTRACT: VIRGINIA BEACH FOG INSPECTION PROGRAM

By Deborah Painter

FOG stands for Fats, Oils and Grease, and it can literally be a very sticky and messy problem for municipalities, as well as a very expensive one. Built up grease from the use and preparation of dairy products, salad dressings, and fried foods is a leading cause of sewer backups and sanitary overflows. In February of 2009 the Virginia Beach City Council approved an ordinance to amend the City Code for Sewers and Sewage Disposal to include that made it illegal for food service establishments (FSEs) to discharge into the sewer system any waste that would interfere with its operation. To answer this problem, the City began a FOG inspection program that will focus on the education and inspection of FSE's grease control device use and maintenance. REMSA has been contracted by the City of Virginia Beach to run the FOG inspection program. Initially, as required by ordinance, a onetime only pre-inspection will be scheduled by REMSA for each food service establishment to be sure everyone is registered and all the information is in the City's database. Additionally, the pre-inspection's intent is to be sure all the establishments are educated on the City's Best Management Practices with regards to the handling of

FOG. After the pre-inspection, each FSE will be inspected annually for compliance.

Virginia Beach is the first city in Virginia to have a FOG Program under an Order of Consent with the state Department of Environmental Quality. There are roughly 1,300 FSEs in Virginia Beach, and until now, the only requirement they have had was to have their grease control devices registered. But by this fall the FOG Inspection Program will be in full swing.

For more information on this program and REMSA's involvement contact Scott Bellows, Environmental Services Director