

## Handling Restaurant Grease: Bear-proof Grease Vessels

One of the most rewarding discoveries for a bear in an urban area is an unsecured grease vessel. Many restaurants and eateries use these vessels to store used cooking oil which is then collected by companies that recycle the oil into products like biodiesel.

Although this is an important environmental service, when mishandled, it can come at the cost of a bear's life. A full standard barrel contains 210 liters of oil. That translates into a whopping 1.6 MILLION calories for the smaller vessels (in bear terms, that is a MAJOR SCORE... equal to many weeks of foraging for berries). The caloric value, combined with the smell of tasty fryer fixings, makes grease vessels irresistible.

Attractants such as this draw bears into urban areas. Once there, it is often easy for bears to opportunistically find unsecured food, garbage, or other attractants. It only takes one food reward for a bear to start becoming food conditioned. Food conditioned bears are at a much higher risk for being killed due to human-bear conflict.



### Step One: Where to Get Them

In Whistler, a member of our Whistler Black Bear Working Group, Carney's Waste Systems [[www.carneyswaste.com](http://www.carneyswaste.com)], has designed some very effective and user-friendly large vessels that seem to have passed the test of time. West Coast Reduction Ltd. [[www.wcrl.com](http://www.wcrl.com)] also supply vessels to their accounts in Whistler and Vancouver area. In the US, certified bear-proof vessels are available at [www.bearproofsystems.com](http://www.bearproofsystems.com). Be cautious if fabricating your own vessel to ensure that bear-proof specifications are met. See step three for key features. Product testing and certification are available at Living with Wildlife Foundation [[www.lwwf.org](http://www.lwwf.org)].



### Step Two: Secure Storage Location

Grease vessels must be located in an area that is inaccessible to bears, such as inside a building, on a secure loading bay or in a bear-proof garbage shed. For guidelines on constructing a bear-proof enclosure see: <http://www.bearsmart.com/docs/Bear-proofGarbageEnclosure.pdf>. It is crucial that any grease vessels not within an enclosure



are properly affixed to the ground (feet bolted to the cement) or secured to a nearby wall or cement post (either with a heavy-duty chain or a welded arm as seen above) to prevent tipping and rocking by bears.

### **Step Three: Nuts and Bolts: Vessel Design**

All vessels should be designed in such a way that bears can not access the grease inside. Although there are no established guidelines, we do know a bit about what seems to work. Key features include: lockable access points that prevent paws from reaching in to scoop out oil; heavy-duty commercial gauge steel resistant to bear damage (it helps if there are no gaps between which bears can pry open a lid); and a user-friendly dual-action locking mechanism (such as a pad lock or other mechanism). Watch a demonstration of a grease barrel that is not user-friendly and as a result not bear-proof [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opnH8SBDwOO>].

### **Step Four: Maintenance**

Grease barrels must be kept locked, secured, and in proper working order at ALL TIMES. In addition, all grease barrels (as well as garbage areas and loading bays) must be kept clean and free of odour. This means frequent power washing with hot soapy water.

Be the leader you know you can be and contribute to conservation through coexistence. Keep your grease barrels in proper working order, secure, clean, and free of odour. Only YOU can prevent conflict with bears.



For more information on bear smart initiatives, visit [www.bearsmart.com](http://www.bearsmart.com).

*Brought to you by:  
Get Bear Smart Society  
PO Box 502, Whistler, BC, Canada V0N 1B0  
[e:info@bearsmart.com](mailto:info@bearsmart.com)*

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