When Should You Use a Lift Station Degreaser? A Practical Guide for Facility Maintenance Teams

If you manage the restrooms, grounds, or utility systems at a hotel, motel, rest stop, or any medium-to-large hospitality property, you already know that a lift station problem rarely stays quiet. Odors travel fast, guest complaints follow even faster, and a backed-up wet well can shut down a bathroom bank right when you need it most. Knowing when—and why—to reach for a lift station degreaser can mean the difference between a quick maintenance win and an all-day emergency.

This guide walks through the two situations where a quality degreaser earns its place in your maintenance toolkit: fighting severe odors and preventing the recurring fats, oils, and grease (FOG) buildup that causes so many of those odors in the first place. We'll also cover what to look for when choosing a product, so you can protect your equipment, your staff, and your guests' first impressions.

What Exactly Is a Lift Station, and Why Does It Smell?

Before diving into solutions, it helps to understand the problem. A lift station is essentially a pump system that moves wastewater from a lower point to a higher point, typically when gravity alone can't get sewage to the main treatment line. At the heart of the lift station is the "wet well," a holding chamber where wastewater collects before the pumps move it onward. Floats inside the wet well act like sensors, triggering the pumps to turn on and off as water levels rise and fall.

Here's the catch: wastewater isn't just water. It carries fats, oils, and grease from kitchens, laundry facilities, and restrooms. Over time, that **FOG** clings to the walls of the wet well and coats the floats, much like grease building up inside a pan that's never scrubbed. As that layer thickens and decomposes, it produces a sulfurous, rotten-egg odor that no guest wants to associate with your property.

Use a Degreaser When You're Experiencing Severe Odors

If your facility has started drawing complaints about sewer-like smells near restrooms, laundry rooms, or outdoor lift station access points, that's your first sign it's time to act. Severe, persistent odors are rarely a one-time event; they're usually a symptom of organic buildup that's been accumulating for weeks or months.

At their core, lift station degreasers eliminate odors. Rather than masking the smell like an air freshener, a properly formulated degreaser breaks down the organic material actually causing the odor. Think of it like degreasing a stovetop: a surface wipe might make things

look clean for a moment, but only a real degreaser cuts through the baked-on residue at its source.

For maintenance teams managing high-traffic facilities, this distinction matters. A rest stop or hotel can't afford to mask a problem that will resurface within days. You need a solution engineered to target the buildup directly, reducing odor at the source rather than temporarily masking it. Always follow the label directions and safety guidance for dosage, dilution, and application frequency, since these can vary based on your wet well size and the severity of the buildup.

Preventing Recurring FOG Buildup on Wet Well Walls and Floats

Eliminating an existing odor is only half the equation. The more strategic use of a lift station degreaser is prevention: stopping FOG from accumulating on wet well walls and floats in the first place.

Here's why this matters so much for hospitality properties specifically. Commercial kitchens, guest laundry services, and high-occupancy restrooms generate a steady stream of fats, oils, and grease. Without regular intervention, that FOG doesn't just sit at the bottom of the wet well; it climbs the walls and coats the floats that control your pump cycles. When floats become coated in grease, they can stick or misread water levels, leading to pump malfunctions, overflows, or costly emergency service calls.

Routine degreaser application helps keep those surfaces clear, allowing floats to move freely and pumps to cycle as designed. This is where a consistent maintenance schedule becomes a facility's best friend. Rather than waiting for odors or equipment issues to force your hand, building degreaser treatments into your regular maintenance rotation can help you avoid the downtime, guest dissatisfaction, and repair costs that come with a neglected lift station.

For teams juggling daily-to-weekly cleaning schedules across multiple properties, this proactive approach also supports long-term cost efficiency. Preventing buildup is almost always less labor-intensive (and less expensive) than remediating a fully clogged or malfunctioning system.

Choosing the Right Degreaser for the Job

Not all degreasers are created equal, and choosing the wrong one can waste product, deliver disappointing results, or even damage your equipment. When evaluating options for your facility, keep these factors in mind:

Look for formulations designed specifically for wastewater and lift station environments, since general-purpose industrial degreasers may not be engineered to work effectively in

that setting. Safety matters as much as performance: non-corrosive products that protect both surfaces and staff can extend equipment life while reducing risk for the team applying them. For properties committed to sustainability, eco-friendly formulations allow you to maintain your facility without compromising your environmental standards.

Cost efficiency is another key consideration, particularly for larger properties managing multiple lift stations or treating them on a recurring basis. Concentrated, bulk-friendly options can meaningfully reduce your per-application cost over time compared to smaller, less efficient products.

As with any maintenance chemical, read and follow the product label closely. Proper dilution ratios, application frequency, and safety handling instructions all affect how well a degreaser performs and how safely your team can use it.

Keep Odors—and Complaints—Out of Your Facility

A well-maintained lift station is one of those behind-the-scenes systems guests never think about, which is exactly how it should stay. Whether you're responding to an active odor issue or building a proactive maintenance plan to prevent FOG from taking hold, choosing an effective, safe, and non-corrosive degreaser gives your team a reliable tool to protect both your equipment and your guest experience.

If you're ready to build odor control and FOG prevention into your regular maintenance routine, explore Chemex Industries' line of cleaning and maintenance solutions designed for hospitality facilities, and give your team the confidence that comes with a lift station that simply works as it should.