

Smoke Testing

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What exactly is a smoke test?

Non-toxic smoke blowers are placed on sanitary sewer manholes and smoke is blown through the sanitary sewer collection system. Anywhere the smoke exits, there is potential for stormwater to enter the sanitary sewer collection system. A three-person crew will use a high-capacity blower smoke technique to test each sanitary sewer line.

What can I expect to see?

You may see smoke coming out of roof vent pipes, open plumbing outlets, manhole covers, cleanouts, or infrequently used drains.

What is the purpose of smoke testing?

Field staff will locate leaks in the sanitary sewer collection system and improper drain connections which may flood the sanitary sewer collection system when it rains. In addition, smoke testing can help locate inadequate connections that homeowners or occupants are not aware of. If the smoke can get into your house, so can potentially harmful sewer gas. You should correct the problem as soon as possible.

Is the smoke harmful?

No. It is safe, non-toxic, and harmless to humans, pets, food, clothing, drapes, and furniture. The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the materials used is on file with the City and can be provided upon request.

What should I do if smoke comes out of a plumbing fixture in my house?

Smoke should not enter your home if it is properly plumbed and vented, and water traps under drains contain water. However, should you have smoke entering your home, you should first open windows for ventilation. Then tell the crew chief working in the area. Please be aware of the following:

- The smoke is a non-toxic substance which is clean and harmless to humans, pets, food, and material goods.
- The testing operation takes only 10 to 15 minutes. If smoke can enter, it will do so during this period.
- If smoke does enter, it will usually clear within about 15 to 20 minutes once windows and doors are opened.
- Please advise a testing crew member of any smoke in your home.
- Help prevent smoke leakage through dry water traps by turning on plumbing fixtures for a few seconds prior to smoke testing.

We have a sick person in the house. What should we do if smoke gets into the building?

Open windows for ventilation. This will allow the smoke to dissipate. Contact the crew supervisor in the area. If requested, the crew supervisor will appoint someone to stand by at, or in, your home. If the sick person can stay in a well-ventilated room during the testing the chance of encountering a high smoke concentration will be less.



Engineering



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Should I be at home during the testing?

Your presence at home is not required during the test. Washington Township Fire and Emergency Services have been notified. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.

I will not be at home during smoke testing and have pets in the house. What should I do?

The smoke is not harmful to pets. It would be advantageous to leave several windows partially open for ventilation, should any smoke enter the building. If the building is properly plumbed and vented, and all traps have water in them, there should not be any smoke.

If smoke gets into the house, how long does it take for the smoke to dissipate?

This will depend upon how much smoke enters the building, and how much ventilation you can provide. It usually takes only 15 to 20 minutes.

Can smoke block the sewer?

No. The smoke is made up of a vaporous substance, mostly water.

What happens if you find a bad sewer or lack of traps in a building?

All test information will be recorded for the City of Dublin Department of Engineering. The City will determine and assist with steps as necessary to remedy any identified deficiencies.

Department of Engineering

If you would like to ask questions about the smoke testing, please contact Michael Hendershot, P.E., Director of Utilities and Stormwater Management at 614.410.4657, or mhendershot@dublin.oh.us.