



Smoke Test Fact Sheet

The Town's sanitary sewer system is separated from the storm sewer system and is not designed to handle stormwater. A "Smoke Test" is a common tool used in sanitary sewer systems, to locate breaks, defects or illegal connections allowing stormwater into the system. Smoke testing can help locate bad connections which property owners may not be aware of.

Is the smoke harmful?

No, the smoke is non-toxic. It may cause you to cough, but it is not harmful to your health and will not harm clothing, drapes, or furniture. There may be a slight odour associated with the smoke.

What is the purpose of smoke testing?

Smoke testing is utilized to identify and locate possible leaks, cross connections, or illegal connections to the sanitary sewer system which are adding "clear" water to the system. Smoke testing can help locate bad connections that homeowners or occupants may not be aware of. If a problem is found within the sewer lateral on the Town right-of-way, the Town will schedule repair or replacement of the line.

What should I do if smoke gets into my building?

Contact the Town at 519-284-2340 or notify the crews who will be working in the area. Open windows for ventilation. The smoke will soon dissipate. When you receive notice that smoke testing will take place, you should check to see that all drain traps within the building have water in them.

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

With adequate ventilation, the smoke will dissipate quickly.

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

The smoke is not harmful to pets. It would be a good idea to leave several windows partially open for ventilation should any smoke enter the building. If you have proper connections and all traps have water in them, there should not be any problems.

Will this work cause sewer back-ups?

Smoke will not cause sewer back-ups. The contractor is utilizing flaps within the system to control the distribution of smoke, and no obstruction of flow will be caused. Test runs are being limited during the program to control smoke, and reduce the time needed for testing in areas.

What happens if you find illegal connections, bad sewers or lack of traps in a building?

This information will be collected by the Town, and it will be incumbent on the Town to determine what steps are necessary to remedy the problem(s).

Why is the Town doing this work?

The Town has been actively working to identify and mitigate sources of Inflow and Infiltration into the sanitary collection system. Smoke testing will allow the Town to identify sources of Inflow and begin remediation activities. This work program is a compliment to flow monitoring, manhole inspections and camera inspections already completed by the Town.

For more information, please visit our website at www.townofstmarys.com/InflowandInfiltration.aspx

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