

SMOKE TESTING



WHAT IS SMOKE TESTING AND WHY IS IT CONDUCTED?

Smoke testing is one of the most efficient and cost-effective methods of locating sources of inflow and infiltration problems with sewers. The non-toxic smoke will help locate places where stormwater and other surface waters enter the sanitary sewers. Smoke testing is conducted by placing a blower over a centrally located manhole and forcing non-toxic smoke through a sewer line. The smoke under pressure will fill the main line plus any connections, then follow the path of any leaks to the ground's surface, quickly revealing the source of inflow and infiltration (I&I). I&I is defined as groundwater or rainwater entering the sewer lines through cracks, breaks, and/or areas not intended to drain to the sewer system. It robs the pipes of needed capacity, and causes overflows and flooding. The smoke will be noticeable wherever there is a leak in a sanitary sewer pipe, such as a crack in a sewer pipe, a cross-connection between a storm sewer and a sanitary sewer, the connection between a roof drain and the sanitary sewer, a broken cleanout cap, or a defective or damaged manhole.

IS THE SMOKE HARMFUL?

No. The smoke is specially manufactured for testing and is not dangerous or toxic, it leaves no residue or stains, and should not affect plants or pets. Visible smoke and/or smoke odor will last only a few minutes in cases of proper ventilation. In the unlikely event that citizens come in direct contact with the smoke, there is a slight possibility for minor respiratory passage irritation. However, if there are people in your household or building with emphysema, asthma or other respiratory conditions, please notify the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management so that the City can further discuss your situation and ensure your comfort and safety.

WHAT IF SMOKE ENTERS THE HOUSE OR BUILDING?

The smoke has a very distinctive, but not unpleasant, odor. During testing, it is normal to see smoke coming from rooftop sewer vents. Smoke should exit the vent stacks of the surrounding properties within the testing area. If traces of smoke or its odor are detected in your building or home, it is an indication that gases from the sewer system could also be entering. Sewer gases can be dangerous, and since some gases have no odor or color, they can enter a building undetected. If you observe smoke in your building during testing, the City urges you to contact your plumber to have him try to locate the source of the leak that you have witnessed and take the appropriate corrective measures. Location, identification and correction of the source of smoke that enters your building should quickly be addressed.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN AND IF SMOKE TESTING IS BEING CONDUCTED IN MY AREA?

The residents of the affected area will receive notices prior to testing. Contact numbers will be provided if you should have any questions or concerns.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE FOR SMOKE TESTING?

To keep smoke from unnecessarily entering your building, we suggest you run water into all of your drains for five minutes on the night prior to the date that smoke testing will be conducted. Pay special attention to drains, such as basement and garage drains, that are used infrequently. Make sure to crack windows for ventilation if pets are in the home.

FACT SHEET



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CITY OF ATLANTA DEPARTMENT OF
**watershed
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CLEAN WATER ATLANTA



DWM Customer Service: 404-546-0311
www.atlantawatershed.org/cleanwateratlanta

Clean Water Atlanta is a comprehensive program created to ensure clean drinking water, clean streams and a healthy environment for the City of Atlanta and its downstream neighbors. To learn more about Clean Water Atlanta please visit our website www.Atlantawatershed.org/cleanwateratlanta or call 311.