

Frequently asked Questions:

What is the benefit to the township for performing a Smoke Test? Smoke Testing is used to identify sections of sewers which may exhibit inflow during rainfall. Inflow sources are down spout connections, cellars, yard and area drains, foundation drains, abandoned building sewers, faulty connections, illegal connections, and storm water drainage system cross connections. It can also detect structural damages and leaking joints in sewer pipes and overflow points in sewer systems.

What exactly is a Smoke Test? A two/three-man crew places a smoke blower over manholes and smoke is blown through the sewer system. Anywhere the smoke exits, there is potential for storm water to enter the sewer system.

How will residents know when Smoke Testing will be performed in their neighborhoods? Door hangers will be placed on the front door of every building on the streets to be smoke tested at least 24 to 48 hours in advance. Notices will be distributed by the smoke testing field crew.

How are the smoke test crews recognizable in the field? All field personnel are uniformed and carry identification badges. Crew members operate from vehicles with company signage.

Is the smoke hazardous? NO! The smoke that comes out of the vent stacks on houses or holes in the ground is non-toxic, harmless, and has no odor. It does not create a fire hazard.

Do residents have to do anything to prepare their homes for Smoke Testing? One gallon of water should be poured into the drain traps of floors, sinks, showers, and tubs to prevent the smoke from entering the building. If smoke does enter, possible causes are defective sewer systems in the building, dry traps, defective wax beneath toilets, terminated vents or breaks, missing or unsealed cleanouts of any kind will cause smoke to enter the building. The resident should consult a licensed plumber to correct these problems. It is imperative to avoid panic or alarm if workers or residents suddenly see smoke in their building. If harmless smoke can enter through faulty plumbing, the potential exists for dangerous sewer gases to also enter.

What if smoke comes out of a resident's yard or driveway? This could mean that there a drain on the property which is connected to the house sewer line instead of the storm system. It could also mean that there is not direct connection, but that the lateral has breaks or cracks in the pipe that drain runoff after it has entered into the soil.

If there is smoke in the resident's yard, does that mean the cause of the leak needs to be dug up? In a worst-case scenario, yes, but there are many other solutions, such as disconnecting the drain or lining a portion of the house lateral without an excavation.

Does the resident need to be home when the Smoke Testing is performed? Homeowners do not need to be home and field crews will not need to enter the residence. Field crews will record the testing, take photos, and measure distances so the defects can be located.