Smoke Testing – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Waterbury, CT

What is smoke testing?

Smoke testing involves blowing harmless smoke into the sanitary sewer mains to determine any areas where storm and/or surface water or illicit connections may be entering the sewer system.

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.

Is it okay is smoke is coming out of building vents?

Yes, the smoke should not enter your home if your house has proper pluming, ventilation and water traps containing water.

Do I need to do anything to prepare for smoke testing?

Drain traps should always be filled with water to prevent sewer gases from entering your home. Please make sure that you run water in any fixtures that are not regularly used.

Do I need to be home when smoke testing is performed?

Homeowners do not need to be home and at no time will field crews need to enter residences or buildings. Smoke testing crews will be noticeable documenting the testing, taking photos, and measuring distances.

Where can smoke be seen during the testing?

The goal of smoke testing is to determine any sources that may be connected to sanitary sewer mains. Aside from the vent stacks on houses, smoke may be seen coming from sanitary sewer manholes, gutters, yard drains, catch basins, or any other potential sources that may be connected to the sewer system.

Why is the smoke entering my home?

Because the plumbing appliances in your house or building are connected to the sanitary sewer system, some smoke may enter your home or place of business if the:

- Vents connected to your building's sewer pipes are inadequate, defective, or improperly installed.
- Traps under sinks, tubs, basins, showers and other drains are dry, defective, improperly installed, or missing.
- Pipes, connections and seals of the wastewater drain system in and under your buildings are damaged, defective, have plugs missing, or are improperly installed.

What should I do if smoke gets into my home?

- Do Not Become Alarmed
- Open windows to allow ventilation and note the location of the smoke emission; smoke will clear within a few minutes
- Exit the building and notify smoke testing personnel in the area.