

Frequently Asked Questions about Smoke Testing

What is the purpose of smoke testing?

The purpose of the testing is to locate potential points where extraneous water is entering into the sanitary sewer system. Smoke testing can help locate improper connections to the system, as well as areas where unwanted water is entering the system.

What are the benefits of smoke testing?

Smoke testing is a simple and fast method of testing the sewer system. The smoke is harmless and will disappear within a few minutes. The testing is also a cost effective way to find areas of the sewer system that need improvement.

Is the smoke harmful?

No. The smoke is not harmful to your health, and will not harm clothing or furniture.

What should I do to prepare for the smoke testing?

You should ensure that all traps in sinks, toilets, basins, tubs, floor drains, etc. have water in them. This can be done by pouring a pint of tap water into each drain.

What does it mean if smoke enters my house?

If smoke enters your home during the test, it probably means that there are deficiencies in your plumbing that are allowing sewer gas to enter.

What should I do if smoke gets into the house?

If smoke does enter your home, open your windows to clear the smoke, note the location of the smoke, and speak with one of the Harford County personnel conducting the test. They will discuss with you what should be done to correct the problem.

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

The smoke will dissipate within a few minutes.

I will not be home during the testing. Should I be concerned about my pets?

The smoke is not harmful to pets. You may want to open some windows partially open for ventilation if any smoke should enter your home. If you have proper connections and all of your traps have water in them, there should not be any problem.

What if I have additional questions or concerns regarding smoke testing?

Please contact the Harford County Department of Public Works, Division of Water & Sewer, at (410) 638-3300.