

Naugatuck Smoke Testing

Veolia Water crews will be smoke testing sanitary sewers as part of the Borough's ongoing sanitary sewer inspection program. **The following sewers in the streets below will be smoke tested beginning Tuesday, Sept 6, 2011 through Friday Sept. 16, 2011 from 7:00 AM to 3 PM: Hoadley, Street, Aetna Street, Galpin Street, Beebee Street, Highland Street and Homestead Street.**

The smoke testing helps to identify areas where "clear" water is entering the system and could cause sanitary sewer backups. If smoke should enter your building during the test, it probably means that there are defects in the plumbing that could allow dangerous sewer gas to enter your home. This testing cannot be conducted during rainy periods or windy conditions. If you have any questions, or desire more information, if people in your building have asthma, emphysema or some other respiratory conditions and are planning to stay in the building during the testing, if you have dogs, birds, or pets that will be confined alone in the building, any person who is alone and is an invalid and may be sleeping, elderly persons who may be alone and might be alarmed or confused if they see smoke, notify the waste water facility at 203-723-1433 from 7 AM to 4 PM so that we can discuss your case in further detail or answer any questions.

Smoke testing safety: During the testing, a special, non-toxic smoke is forced into the sewer lines in your neighborhood. This smoke leaves no residuals or stains and has no effect on plants or animals. Direct contact with the smoke may cause minor respiratory irritation in some people.

Testing notification: Veolia Water, the operator of the wastewater treatment facility will perform the smoke testing. Crew members wear uniforms and will drive vehicles identified with the Veolia emblem. The crewmembers will not request entry into your home, but will be available in the neighborhood to assist you if you have any questions about the process. Signs will also be placed in the right-of-way areas of the streets to identify smoke testing areas.

Smoke in your home or building: To keep smoke from unnecessarily entering your structure, run water into all of your drains for one minute, especially those used infrequently. Smoke should not enter your structure unless:

- Vents connected to your building's sewer pipe are inadequate, defective or improperly installed;
- Traps under sinks, tubs, basins, showers and other drains are dry, defective, improperly installed or missing; or
- Pipe, connections and seals of the wastewater drain system in and under your building are damaged, defective, have clean out plugs missing or are improperly installed.
- Do not be concerned if you see testing smoke coming from your rooftop sewer vents; this is normal.

If you do see or smell smoke in your structure, immediately report it to the testing crew: This may mean that harmful gases from the sewer are entering your structure. Location, identification of the smoke entering your house is strongly recommended.

The following are numbers of the crew members that will be performing the testing: 203-509-6012, or 203-509-6011.

How does smoke testing work? Smoke testing forces smoke-filled air through a sanitary sewer line. The smoke under pressure will fill the main line plus any connections and then follow the path of any leak to the ground surface, quickly revealing the source of the problem. Only enough force to overcome atmospheric pressure is required. As long as openings exist for the smoke to follow, smoke tests are effective, regardless of surface type, soil type and depth of lines.

Why should we smoke test? Smoke testing is the most efficient and cost effective way to locate and identify where clear water is entering the sewer system. Smoke testing is becoming a requirement nationwide for locating clear water problems that are threatening the ability to properly treat wastewater and costing millions of dollars to wastewater treatment facilities. Smoke testing will also help identify plumbing leaks in buildings. Sewer gases can cause health problems for building occupants.

Smoke testing FAQ

Q. Will smoke testing of the sewers allow smoke to get into my home?

A. No, provided that your plumbing drains "traps" are not dry. Drains that are used once every several weeks should be okay. If you are not sure, simply run water down the drain for a minute to ensure that the trap is not dry. It is important to locate dry traps as they could allow sewer gas to enter the home.

Q. Is the smoke harmful?

A. No, this process is endorsed by the Environmental Protection Agency and has been safely used for more than 20 years. The "smoke" is not true smoke, but rather a mist containing a large percentage of atmospheric moisture that is highly visible at low concentrations. It will not harm your health or leave a stain and will disappear rapidly without leaving an odor. Material safety data sheets will be available upon request. Since any smoke can be an irritant, direct contact with the smoke may cause minor respiratory irritation in some people. Individuals with respiratory problems such as chronic asthma, emphysema or other respiratory conditions should avoid direct exposure to the smoke. Please contact Drew Young or Jeff Zimmerman at 513-858-7760 to discuss your situation in further detail.

Q. What should I do if smoke gets into the house?

A. Contact a field crew member working in the area at 203-509-6012, 203-509-6011. Open windows for ventilation. The smoke will soon dissipate.

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

A. The smoke will dissipate quickly with adequate ventilation.

Q. What is the purpose of smoke testing?

A. The main purpose of smoke testing is to locate areas where clear water may be entering the sanitary system.

Q. How will I know when the testing is scheduled to occur?

A. Notice will be placed in the local newspaper, and information will be provided in the Borough's web site. Signs will also be placed along the roadways during the testing.

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

A. 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.

Q. Can smoke plug the sewer?

A. There is no way smoke can plug the sewer. The smoke is made up of a vaporized substance.

Q. Where does the smoke appear?

A. Smoke may be seen coming from roof vents, building foundations, manhole covers or yard cleanouts. Smoke coming from roof vents on the roof of homes is a normal occurrence and indicates to the crews that smoke has filled all sewers.

Q. What happens if you find a bad sewer connector or leak?

A. This information will be documented for further investigation.

Q. Will rodents be smoked out?

A. No. However, the smoke may detect broken building sewers where there is a potential for rodent access. Owners will be notified to repair broken building sewers.