



**Yorktown Town Hall**  
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## **SMOKE TESTING – SEWER PIPING** **OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2020**

### **NOTICE TO RESIDENTS**

This letter is to notify you that the Yorktown Sewer Department plans to start testing the sanitary sewer lines in your neighborhood as part of our Inflow/Infiltration (I/I) Reduction Program. The program objective is to remove storm water sources from the sanitary sewer system, keep wastewater treatment costs and sanitary sewer rates low, and protect the environment.

The smoke used for testing is non-toxic and non-hazardous and is manufactured specifically for this purpose. This type of testing is a standard method of detecting sewer defects and storm water cross connections to the sanitary sewer system. Smoke testing consists of placing a high capacity blower on top of a sanitary sewer manhole and forcing “smoke” down into the sewer system. The smoke, under pressure from the blower, travels through the sewer system and escapes through any connection, cracks, leaks, etc., along the way to reveal sources of I/I within the study area.

See attached [Smoke Testing FAQ](#) for commonly asked questions about the process.

The smoke should not enter your building or residence, but if it does, it will have a distinct odor and should only last a few minutes with proper ventilation.

You do not need to be home during the smoke testing field work.

Smoke should not enter your home; however, if it does this could be an indication of a defect in your plumbing system. This defect could allow sewer gases to enter inside your home, which is a potential health hazard. Corrections of such defects on private property are the responsibility of the property owner, and a licensed plumber should be consulted to ensure the proper corrections are made. If smoke does enter your home or building, please notify the field technicians who are conducting the test.

The information gathered during the smoke testing project will be used to create a prioritized plan to reduce I/I impacts to the sanitary sewer system. Sewer defects will exist on both public and private property and will need to be corrected in a timely manner.

After the smoke testing is complete, notices will be sent to those property owners that will need to make corrections. Often times, it can be as simple as removing a connected roof downspout and letting it drain above ground, or replacing a broken or missing lateral cleanout cap in your yard. The Engineering and Sewer Departments will assist homeowners in determining the best approach in disconnecting I/I sources and rerouting storm drainage. Reducing I/I will keep sanitary sewer rate charges low, while also protecting the environment.

**For further questions regarding this program or test procedure, please call the Engineering Department at: (914) 962-5722 ext. 220**

# Frequently Asked Questions

## ***What exactly is a Smoke Test and why is it being done now?***

A field crew from Yorktown Sewer Department will use a blower technique to test sewer lines with smoke tablets. Smoke blowers are placed on manholes and smoke is blown through the sewer system. Any location where smoke is identified during the test, except plumbing vent stacks, is a potential Infiltration/Inflow source for storm water or ground water to enter the collection system.

The Town is required by regulatory authorities to be continuously assessing the performance and operation of the sanitary sewer collection system. A smoke test is considered an effective method for identifying sources of I/I and will be used by the Department to prevent excessive flow in the system.

## ***What is the benefit to the Town for performing a Smoke Test?***

Smoke testing is one technique utilized to identify segments of sewers that may exhibit inflow during heavy rainfall. Smoke testing is best used to detect inflow sources such as roof downspouts, driveway, yard and area drains, foundation drains, illegal connections, and storm water drainage system cross connections. It can also detect structural damages and leaking joints in sewer pipes.

## ***How will residents know when Smoke Testing will be performed in their neighborhoods?***

Testing will be performed during the month of October and November 2019 and affected residents are being notified with this informational letter. Maps of the areas to be tested will also be posted on the Town website: <http://www.yorktownny.org/engineeringandsewer>

## ***Is the smoke that is used hazardous?***

The smoke that comes out of the vent stacks on houses or holes in the ground is non-toxic, harmless. It does not create a fire hazard. The Police and Fire Departments will be made aware of the test areas and schedule.

## ***Do residents have to do anything to prepare their homes for Smoke Testing?***

Plumbing drain traps are normally filled with water to prevent the smoke from entering the building. If you are concerned about low-use drains, run the faucet for 30-60 seconds or pour about 3 cups of water into floor and sink drains to fill the traps. If smoke does enter, the resident should consult a licensed plumber to perform the repairs. If smoke from the testing can enter through faulty plumbing, the potential exists for dangerous sewer gases to also enter the home.

## ***Does the resident need to be home when the Smoke Testing is performed?***

Homeowners do not need to be home and at no time will field crews need to enter the residence. Field inspectors will be documenting the testing, taking photos and measuring distances so that the defects may be found at a later date and repaired.

## ***What happens after the smoke testing has been completed?***

The Town will notify residents who need to make corrections with a letter explaining the nature of defect found and the type of repair needed. We will work with property owners on a timeline for repairs if needed. In most cases a property owner will be allotted 30 days to perform any remedial work that is required.

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