



SMOKE TESTING FACT SHEET

- Kansas City's Overflow Control Program is the largest infrastructure investment in the City's history. The 25-year program aims to improve water quality by reducing the volume and frequency of sewer overflows. The program's city-wide approach will invest \$4.5-\$5 billion to enhance quality of life for all customers and improve water quality in our region.
- Smoke testing is being conducted in areas throughout the City to identify sources of rainwater in the sewer system. Smoke testing is one technique utilized to identify how rainwater enters the sanitary sewer system. Water that enters the sewer system can lead to untreated sewage overflowing in streets and backing up into basements during heavy rainfall periods. Smoke testing can also detect structural damages and leaking joints in sewer pipes that are in need of repair.
- A smoke test is conducted by field crews that blow air and smoke into the sewer system through manholes. Anywhere the smoke exits, there is potential for rainwater to enter the sanitary sewer system.

IS THE SMOKE HAZARDOUS?

The smoke that exits 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.

WHAT IF SMOKE COMES OUT OF MY DRIVEWAY OR YARD?

Smoke coming out of your driveway or yard may indicate a variety of breaks or cracks that may exist in the drain or sanitary sewer service lateral (house lateral) on your property. If you see either, contact the representative in the street conducting the test. You may need to disconnect a drain or line or replace a portion of the house lateral which would require a licensed plumber. A house lateral is the sewer pipe that runs from your home or business to the City's sewer system in the street.

WHAT IF THE TESTING SHOWS NO DEFECTS ON MY PROPERTY?

Smoke testing may show that the sanitary sewer pipe and the house lateral are in good condition, and there are no drainage facilities connected to them. But sometimes the smoke doesn't appear at all even though there may be a problem. Crew members are trained to identify these situations and are prepared to perform follow-up testing using other methods, if needed.





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WHEN WILL SMOKE TESTING BE PERFORMED IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD?

Crews will place door hangers on every house or business building within the project area at least 48 hours in advance of smoke testing.

DO I NEED TO BE HOME WHEN THE SMOKE TESTING IS PERFORMED?

Homeowners do not need to be home while smoke testing is occurring and field crews should not ask to enter the residence. Field inspectors will be documenting the testing, taking photos, and taking measurements so that the defects found may be repaired at a later date.

DO I NEED TO DO ANYTHING TO PREPARE FOR SMOKE TESTING?

To prevent sewer gases from entering your property, drain traps should be filled with water. The day that you receive notification of the smoke testing, pour approximately 24 ounces of water into infrequently used floor, shower, and sink drains, filling the traps to prevent smoke from entering the home or business. If smoke does enter, residents should consult with the smoke testing representative conducting the test, or with a licensed plumber. If this smoke can enter through faulty plumbing, the potential exists for sewer gases to also enter the home or business.

HOW ARE CREWS RECOGNIZABLE IN THE FIELD?

Crews will be dressed in uniforms and carry identification badges. Crew members operate from vehicles with signage that says "Contractor for KC Water." In addition, crews will post signs similar to the one shown on the right throughout the neighborhood where smoke testing is being conducted.



www.kcwaterservices.org/programs/OCP
To view the Smoke Testing video, [CLICK HERE](#)