

McAllen Public Utility – Wastewater Collection Department will be conducting a Smoke Test on the sanitary sewer system in various neighborhood within the city.

ABOUT SMOKE TESTING

McAllen Public Utility will regularly perform sewer system testing throughout the City of McAllen to help locate defects and improve sanitary sewer service. Smoke testing only takes a few hours and forces smoke filled air into the sanitary sewer system. The smoke **test is non-toxic**, odorless and fills the sewer line only to escape to the surface if there are any defects in the sanitary sewer system that need repair.

SMOKE TESTING FACTS

- You do **not** need to be present during the smoke testing.
- Smoke should not enter your home or building (unless there is a leak or seldom used drains).

GET READY

- **Does anyone in your home or business have breathing problems or are they mobility impaired?**
 - Before McAllen Public Utility begins the smoke test, call Julio R. Oviedo or Alejandro Casas at (956)681-1755.
- Have floor drains or toilets not been used in a while?
 - Pour at least 3 cups of water in them a day before the test to keep the smoke out.
 - Tie a damp rag around the drain opening of your washing machine to prevent smoke from entering around the drain pipe.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How does smoke testing work?

Field crews blow air and smoke into sanitary sewer system in the street and monitor where smoke escapes the system. The smoke under pressure will fill the main line as well as any connections and then follow the path of any leak to the ground surface, quickly revealing the source of the problem.

How long will it take?

While crews might be in your area for a few hours, each actual smoke test setup takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Most houses will only be within the testing area for one or two test.

What does it mean if smoke enters my house?

If smoke enters your home during test, it may indicate there are deficiencies in the plumbing that may allow potentially dangerous sewer gases to enter. Plumbing fixtures in your home or business are connected to the sanitary sewer, therefore there is a potential for smoke to enter if the drains are not connected properly. This happens particularly under the following circumstance.

The vents connected to your buildings sewer pipe are inadequate, defective or improperly installed.

The traps under sinks, tubs, basins, etc. are dry, defective, or improperly installed.

The pipes, connections, or seals in the waste water drain system in and/or under your building are damaged, defective, have plugs missing or are improperly installed.

Can the smoke testing activate the smoke alarms?

Yes, smoke may activate alarms during smoke testing. If possible, open windows and/or doors for ventilations. If you have any doubts about origin of the smoke, please call 911.

If you have any questions about the test, health issues or any other concerns, please contact the McAllen Public Utility - Wastewater Collections Department at (956)681-1755. Thank you for your cooperation.