

Nicholson Street Area Sewer System Evaluation Study (SSES) - Smoke Testing FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS DC WATER PROPOSING TO DO?

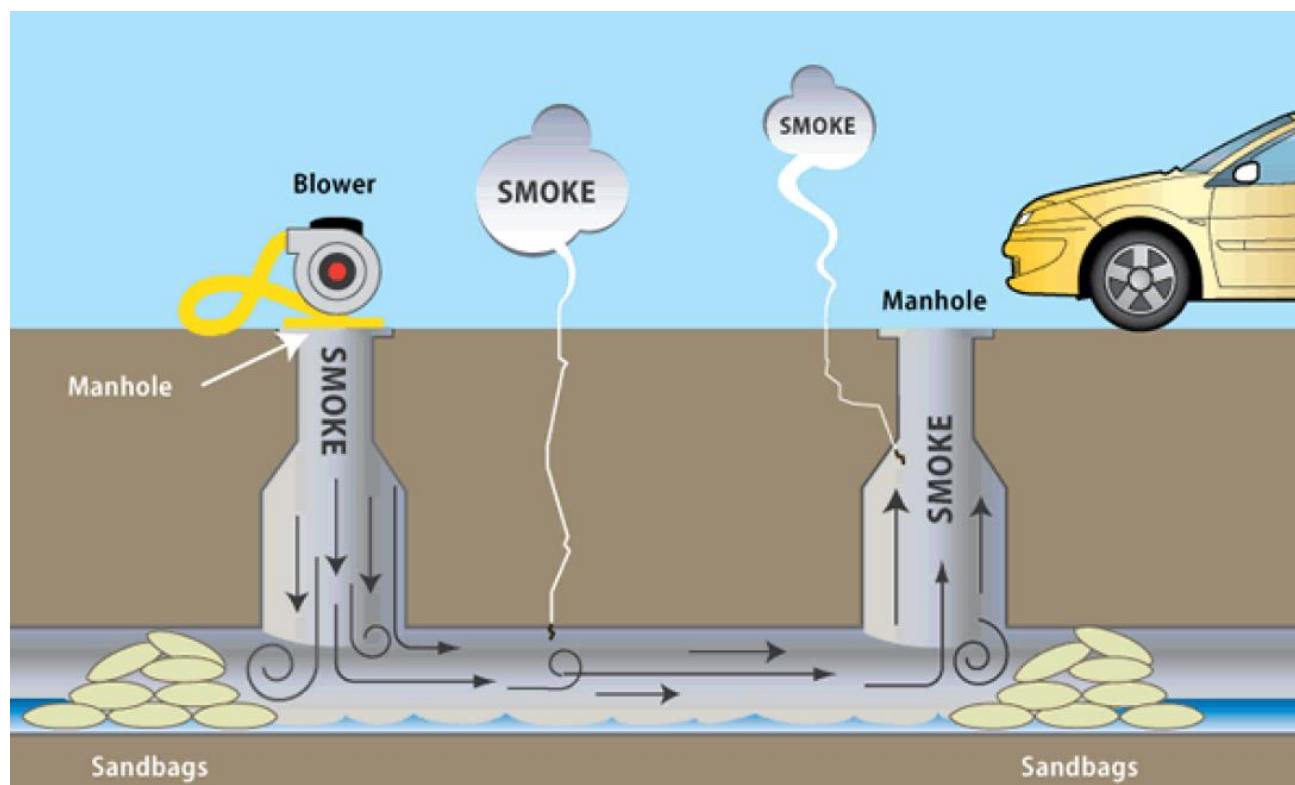
DC Water will conduct smoke testing as part of the Nicholson SSES task in response to the September 10, 2020 extreme weather flash flood event to help identify locations where stormwater water may enter the sewer system.

WHAT DAYS AND TIMES WILL SMOKE TESTING BE PERFORMED?

Smoke testing will be performed Monday to Friday between 8 AM and 5 PM, and usually lasts for about an hour from setting up the equipment to test completion. Smoke testing will not be performed during Federally observed holidays, after rain events, or DDOT stop-work directive. Additional notification will be distributed approximately a week before the scheduled work as this activity is weather-dependent.

WHAT IS SMOKE TESTING?

Smoke testing is an effective and simple process that consists of blowing non-toxic, harmless smoke into a sewer manhole, which mixes with the large volumes of air in the sewers. During smoke testing, a section of the sewer is partially blocked to direct smoke and a blower pumps the smoke into the pipe through the manhole. The smoke travels through the sewer and may escape through any connections, openings, etc. that are also pathways for rainwater and groundwater to enter the sewers. Inflow and infiltration of rainwater and groundwater may enter the sewer from roof leaders, cellar, yard, and area drains; foundation drains; abandoned building sewers; faulty connections; unknown connections; sewer cross connections, structural damages, and leaking joints. Our field inspectors will document the test and take photos.



DO I NEED TO BE HOME DURING SMOKE TESTING?

Residents do not need to be home. At no time will field crews need to enter the residence. Should any smoke enter the building, residents should open the windows to allow it to escape. Please see additional instructions below ("What Should I do if Smoke Gets Into My House") if smoke does enter your home.

IS THE SMOKE HARMFUL?

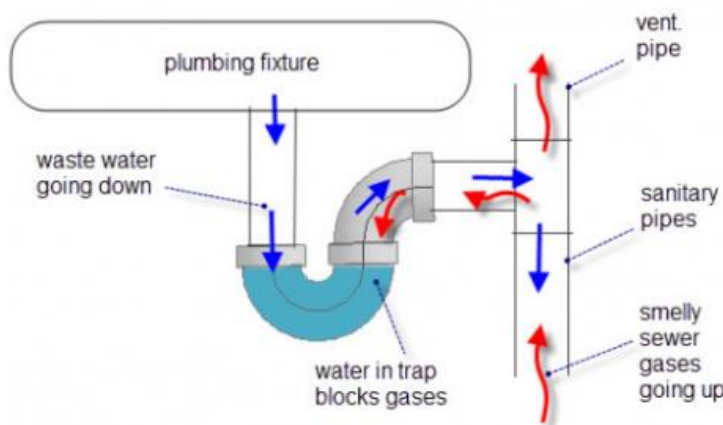
No. It may make you cough, but it is not harmful to your health and will not harm clothing, drapes or furniture. This smoke is similar to the smoke from a fog machine used at concerts. Safety Data Sheets are available upon request.

WHY WOULD SMOKE ENTER MY HOME?

Smoke, in general, should not enter your home. The main reason smoke would enter your home is if your plumbing traps lack water. Plumbing traps are 'P' or 'S' shaped fixtures located under basins, washing facilities, and floor drains. They are designed to retain water so that sewer odors do not enter your home. When you receive a notice that smoke testing will take place, you should check to see that all traps have water in them and follow the below suggestions. Please contact the on-site crew leader through the Smoke Testing Hotline at 202-595-1960 should you experience smoke in your home.

HOW DO I PREVENT SMOKE FROM ENTERING MY HOUSE?

After receiving this notification, residents should run every sink and shower in the house for 1 minute and/or pour about 1 gallon of water through any floor drains to fill the p-traps. This will help prevent smoke from entering the building through these plumbing fixtures. If smoke enters your house, open your windows to aid ventilation and the smoke will soon dissipate. Also call the Smoke Testing Hotline at 202-595-1960. For safety reasons, it is recommended to keep the windows closed when not at home.



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF SMOKE GETS INTO MY HOUSE?

Please contact the on-site crew leader through the Smoke Testing Hotline at 202-595-1960. Open windows for ventilation to dissipate the smoke. Additionally, it may be a good idea to contact a DC licensed master plumber to check your traps which may be allowing sewer gas into your home.

IS THE SMOKE A FIRE HAZARD? WILL THE SMOKE TRIGGER MY SMOKE DETECTOR?

The "smoke" is not a fire hazard and is not anticipated to trigger your smoke detector. However, if the smoke detector is triggered, open your windows to aid ventilation and dissipate smoke.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS OF THE SMOKE FROM SMOKE ENTERING THE HOUSE?

Although the smoke is harmless, excessive exposure to the mists/vapors may cause irritation to eyes, nose, throat, lungs, and respiratory tract. Individuals with respiratory sensitivities are encouraged to ventilate the property and/or leave the premises prior to smoke testing. If you or anyone in your household requires notification immediately prior to the test, please call the on-site crew leader through Smoke Testing Hotline at 202-595-1960 to make arrangements.



I WILL NOT BE AT HOME DURING SMOKE TESTING AND HAVE PETS IN THE HOUSE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

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. In general, no smoke should enter the house.

IF SMOKE GETS INTO THE HOUSE, HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO DISSIPATE?

This will depend upon how much smoke enters the building and how much ventilation you can provide.

CAN SMOKE CLOG THE SEWER?

There is no way smoke can clog a sewer. The smoke is a vaporous substance.

I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS. WHO CAN I CONTACT?

Contact Emanuel Briggs at 202-787-2003 or DC Water Customer Service at 202-354-3600.