

# SMOKE TESTING NOTICE

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**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC  
UTILITIES**

**JULY 2009**

## **THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH PLANS SMOKE TESTING**

The City of Portsmouth will be evaluating the sanitary sewer system in the greater Cradock area over the period from July 27 through August 21, 2009 to find potential sources of infiltration and inflow to the sanitary sewer system by conducting smoke testing. Area residences and businesses will receive a letter of notification of the smoke testing dates prior to the start of the test.

### **WHAT IS SMOKE TESTING?**

Smoke Testing is one technique utilized to identify sections of sewers which may exhibit inflow during heavy rainfall. Smoke Testing is best used to detect inflow sources such as roof leaders, cellar, yard and area drains, foundation drains, abandoned building sewers, faulty connections, illegal connections, and storm water drainage system cross connections. It can also detect structural damage and leaking joints in sewer pipes.



### **IS THE SMOKE HARMFUL?**

The smoke that is used is non-toxic, harmless and has no odor. The smoke may enter your home or business through, for example, a broken pipe or a basement floor drain or plumbing fixture with an empty trap. The smoke may cause some slight, temporary irritation to your nasal passages. Any irritation should be temporary and should disappear quickly after the exposure has ceased. We recommend that you avoid unnecessary exposure to the smoke if you have a physical condition that may be aggravated by breathing smoke.

### **WHEN WILL THE SMOKE TESTING TAKE PLACE AND WHO WILL BE AFFECTED?**

The smoke testing will take place during the months of July and August. Approximately 70,000 linear feet of sanitary sewer line around George Washington Hwy and Victory Blvd will be tested. If your house or building is connected to a sewer being tested, a notice will be attached to your front door approximately 3 days prior to the start of the test.

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## **DOES THE RESIDENT NEED TO BE HOME WHEN THE SMOKE TESTING IS PERFORMED?**

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

## **I WILL NOT BE AT HOME DURING THE TESTING AND HAVE PETS, SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?**

The smoke is not harmful to pets; however, it would be advisable to leave several upstairs windows partially open for ventilation, should any smoke enter the building. If you have proper connections and all of the traps have water in them, there should not be any problems.

## **WHAT CAN I DO TO KEEP THE SMOKE OUT OF MY HOUSE?**

Smoke should not enter your house or building unless there is a leak in your plumbing system. You can minimize the possibility of smoke entering your house or building by making sure that your drain traps are full of water. Fixtures such as sinks, toilets, bathtubs and showers that are used daily will have adequate water in their traps. Fixtures that are rarely used may have dry traps which should be replenished by either using them or by pouring a full bucket of water into the drain traps a few days before the testing period. This will prevent smoke from entering your building through these fixtures. If smoke enters your building, or if you return home or to your business and find smoke inside, open the windows and turn on exhaust fans. The smoke will disappear rapidly once fresh air is introduced.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For more information, you can call or write the City:

### City Contact:

Roland Baltimore, Sewer Superintendent, or  
Frank Wilson, Field Operations Manager  
Department of Public Utilities  
Utilities Operations Center  
430 Meander Road  
Portsmouth, VA 23704  
Office (757) 393-8561

### Smoke Test Contractor:

Josh Crossen, Project Engineer  
Greeley and Hansen  
Department of Public Utilities Consultant  
6325 North Center Dr  
Building 18, Suite 202  
Norfolk, VA 23502  
Office (757) 455-2212 x 18  
Cell (757) 270-3749



**City of Portsmouth  
Department of Public Utilities  
430 Meander Road  
Portsmouth, VA 23704**