

NOTICE OF SMOKE TESTING

Dear Nether Providence Resident,

Please be advised that Maintenance Crews will be smoke testing the sanitary sewer lines in your area **during the months of January** as part of the sanitary sewer evaluation Nether Providence. **The work will begin on Wednesday January 13th between the hours of 8:00 am and 3:00 pm.**

Smoke testing involves blowing harmless, non-toxic, odorless smoke into the sewer system to find locations where unwanted water infiltration may be entering the Rose Valley sanitary sewer system. As a result, smoke may be seen coming from intended or unintended openings to the sewer system. These include vents, building foundations, catch basins, clean-outs, down spouts, sewer laterals, or manhole covers. The smoke will not enter your home if it is properly plumbed, vented, **and the water traps contain water.**

Recommendation for Residents:

The smoke is non-toxic and non-hazardous and is manufactured specifically for this purpose. Smoke of any kind can be irritating to the nasal passages for some people. If you experience smoke irritation, it should be temporary and quickly disappear after exposure has ceased. **If you or any member of your household have a health condition that you feel we need to be aware of, please contact us at the number indicated below.**

It's a best-practice to keep all plumbing fixture drain traps filled with water. Water can evaporate from unused plumbing fixtures and sewer gases can enter the home. If you have a bathroom, floor drain, or plumbing fixture that is seldomly used, traps should be filled by running water in the fixtures the day before the scheduled smoke testing. Water should be added on a monthly basis thereafter in order to prevent sewer gas from entering the home. If you are at home during the smoke testing and notice smoke coming from a faulty fixture, open the windows for ventilation.

During smoke testing you will see Maintenance Crews on your street and along the sewer pipe alignments near the streams/creeks. Any presence of smoke within the house should be reported directly to them or by calling 610.633.2469. **Your presence is not required during the tests and all safety authorities (Police and Fire) will be notified of this event.**

If you should have any further questions, do not hesitate to call 610.633.2469

SMOKE TESTING SEWER LINES

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the benefit to Rose Valley for performing a Smoke Test?

Smoke Testing is used to identify sections of sewers which may be damaged or allow stormwater to enter the sanitary sewer during rainfall. DELCORA plans to use this information to decide on the most cost-effective means of controlling sewer overflows and keeping Rose Valley Borough sewer costs to a minimum.

What exactly is a Smoke Test?

A two/three-man crew places a smoke blower over manholes and smoke is blown through the sanitary sewer system. The smoke under pressure will fill the main line and any connections and then follow the path of any leak to the ground surface. The crew monitors and documents where the smoke exits the system. Anywhere the smoke exits, there is potential for stormwater to enter the sewer system. Sources of stormwater within the sanitary sewer system include: roof leaders, yard drains, area drains, foundation drains, abandoned building sewers, faulty connections, illegal connections, and storm water drainage system cross connections.

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

Door hangers will be placed on the front door of every building on the streets to be smoke tested at least 24 to 48 hours in advance. Notices will be distributed by the smoke testing field crew.

How are the smoke test crews recognizable in the field?

All field personnel are uniformed and carry photo identification badges. Crew members operate from vehicles with company signage.

Is the smoke hazardous?

NO! The smoke that comes out of 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.

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

Plumbing that is in regular use will not require any action by you. However, water can evaporate from unused plumbing fixtures. If you have a bathroom, plumbing fixture, or basement floor drain that is not used or is seldom used, traps should be filled by running water in the fixtures the day before scheduled smoke testing and on a monthly basis thereafter in order to prevent sewer gas from entering the home. If harmless smoke does enter through faulty plumbing during testing, the potential exists for dangerous sewer gases to also enter the home. In this is the case with your home, you should consult a licensed plumber.

What if smoke comes out of a resident's yard or driveway?

This could mean that there a drain on the property which is connected to the house sewer line instead of the storm system. It could also mean that there is not direct connection, but that the lateral has breaks or cracks in the pipe that drain runoff after it has entered into the soil.

If there is smoke in the resident's yard, does that mean the cause of the leak needs to be dug up?

In a worst-case scenario, yes, but there are many other solutions, such as disconnecting the drain or lining a portion of the house lateral without an excavation.

Does the resident need to be home when the Smoke Testing is performed? Homeowners do not need to be home. Field crews will record the testing, taking photos and measuring distances so the defects can be located.

I am a pet owner and my pet(s) will be home during the smoke testing. Should I be concerned?

The smoke is not harmful to pets. If you are at home during the smoke testing and notice smoke coming from a faulty fixture, open the windows for ventilation. Any smoke that enters the building will dissipate in a few minutes.

Can the smoke testing activate the smoke alarms?

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

What should I do if I have emphysema or respiratory problems? Is the smoke harmful?

Although the smoke is considered to have no adverse health effects, individuals with respiratory conditions should take special precautions. Smoke rarely enters a home, but you could sit outside for the duration of the smoke test (20 minutes). If you cannot sit outside, open the windows and shut your bathroom doors. Notify the crew member who knocks on your door that you have a respiratory condition.

Do I have to allow for the inspection of my plumbing?

Rose Valley ordinance does provide for officials of Rose Valley and DELCORA to inspect your plumbing for conditions that would allow stormwater to enter your home. However, during this inspection cycle planned in October, inspectors will only enter your home if you provide verbal or written permission.

What are the inspectors looking for when they inspect my plumbing?

Exterior to your home, inspectors are looking stormwater connections from downspouts, areaway drains, cleanouts, foundation drains, driveway drains and damaged private sewer between your house and the public sewer in the street. Interior to your home, inspectors will try to determine if you have a sump pump connected to the public sewer.

How does the smoke identify where stormwater can enter the public sewer?

If your private sewer lateral from your house to the public sewer has leaks, the smoke will come out of the ground as shown below. Smoke may be seen coming from other sources as well. Flags are placed where smoke escapes. This picture also shows smoke coming out of a roof top sewer vent. This is normal.

