



Charter Township of Monitor

2483 MIDLAND ROAD ≈ BAY CITY, MICHIGAN 48706 ≈ PHONE (989) 684-7203 ≈ FAX (989) 684-9234 www.monitortwp.org

September 27, 2017

Dear Resident or Property Owner:

This letter is to notify you that the Charter Township of Monitor in conjunction with the Bay County Department of Water & Sewer is planning to start sanitary smoke testing in your community on **Monday, October 16, 2017 through Thursday, October 19, 2017.**

Smoke Testing is a standard method of detecting sewer defects and storm water cross connections to the sanitary sewer system. Smoke testing consists of placing a high capacity blower on top of a sanitary sewer manhole and forcing "smoke" down into the sewer system. The smoke, under pressure from the blower, travels through the sewer system and escapes through any connection, cracks, leaks, etc., along the way. This can quickly reveal sources of problems within the study area. See attached **Notice** and **Smoke Testing FAQ's** for commonly asked questions about the process.

The Bay County Department of Water & Sewer will be performing the smoke testing and all personnel will have proper identification and vehicles marked. The smoke used for smoke testing is non-toxic and non-hazardous and is manufactured specifically for this purpose. It leaves no residual or stains, and has no effect on plants or animals. The smoke should not enter your building, but if it does, it should only last a few minutes with proper ventilation.

Both the Monitor Township Fire Department and the Bay County Sheriff Department will be made aware of the smoke testing project areas and schedule. **NOTE:** If you are renting your property, **it is your responsibility to NOTIFY YOUR TENANT** of the upcoming Smoke Testing.

We appreciate your patience and understanding and will make every effort to minimize the inconvenience or disruptions this project may have on you.

Respectfully,

Ken Malkin
Supervisor

KMM/blfp

NOTICE

SMOKE TESTING SEWER LINES

The **Charter Township of Monitor**, in conjunction with the **Bay County Department of Water & Sewer** will be conducting a smoke test of the Township sanitary sewer system in an effort to identify the cause of intermittent odors reported in this area.

Work crews will begin on **Monday, October 16, 2017 and continue testing through Thursday, October 19, 2017.** A “SMOKE TEST” survey will assist our inspection crews in locating breaks, defects and/or illicit connections in the sewer system. The smoke you see coming from the vent stacks on homes or holes in the ground is **NON-TOXIC, NON-STAINING, HAS NO ODOR, IS WHITE TO GRAY IN COLOR, AND CREATES NO FIRE HAZARD.**

The smoke should not enter your home or structure unless you have defective plumbing or dried up drain traps.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

It is advisable for building and home owners to pour a gallon of water into each drain trap of floors, sinks, showers, and tubs prior to our testing. If smoke enters your building or home, there is a good reason to assume that sewer gases may also be entering your home or business. If you are not home and discover smoke when you return, please call (989) 684-3883.

IMPORTANT: If there is **any individual** in your home or business who has **respiratory problems and is immobile**, please notify us at (989) 684-3883 prior to testing.

SMOKE TESTING SEWER LINES

What is the benefit to the Township for performing a Smoke Test?

Smoke testing is used to identify section of sewers which may exhibit inflow during rainfall. Inflow sources are roof leaders, cellars, 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 and overflow points in sewer systems.

What exactly is a Smoke Test?

A two/three man crew places a smoke blower over manholes and smoke is blown through the sewer system. Anywhere the smoke exits, there is a potential for storm water to enter the sewer system.

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?

One gallon of water should be poured into the drain traps of floors, sinks, showers, and tubs to prevent sewer gases from entering the building and to prevent smoke from entering the home. If smoke does enter, the resident should consult a licensed plumber. If harmless smoke can enter through faulty plumbing, the potential exists for dangerous sewer gases to also enter the home.

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

This could mean that there is 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 a direct connection, but that the lateral has breaks or cracks in the pipe that drains 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 and field crews will not need to enter the residence. Field crews will record the testing, taking photos and measuring distances so the defects can be located.

SMOKE TESTING FAQ'S

Q. How does Smoke Testing Work?

A. Smoke testing forces smoke-filled air through a sanitary sewer line. The smoke under pressure will fill the main line plus any connections and then follow the path of any leak to the ground surface, quickly revealing the source of the problem. Only enough force to overcome atmospheric pressure is required.

Q. Why Smoke test?

A. Smoke testing is the most efficient and cost effective way to locate and identify locations where unauthorized water is entering into the sewer system.

Q. Will Smoke testing of the sewers allow smoke to get into my home?

A. No, provided that your plumbings drain "traps" are not dry. Drains that are used once every several weeks should be okay. If you are not sure, simply run water down the drain for a minute to ensure that the trap is not dry. It is important to locate dry traps as they could allow sewer gas to enter the home.

Q. Is the smoke harmful?

A. No, this process is endorsed by the Environmental Protection Agency and has been safely used for more than 20 years. The "smoke" is not true smoke, but rather a mist containing a large percentage of atmospheric moisture that is highly visible at low concentrations. It will not harm your health or leave a stain and will disappear rapidly without leaving an odor. Material safety data sheets will be available upon request. Since any smoke can be an irritant, direct contact with the smoke may cause minor respiratory irritation in some people. Individuals with respiratory problems such as chronic asthma, emphysema or other respiratory conditions should avoid direct exposure to the smoke.

Q. What should I do if smoke gets into the house?

A. Contact a field crew member working in the area. Open windows for ventilation. The smoke will soon dissipate. If you think that you have an actual fire emergency, please do not hesitate to call 911.

Q. If smoke gets into the house, how long does it take the smoke to dissipate?

A. The smoke will dissipate quickly with adequate ventilation.

Smoke Testing Faq's – Continued

Q. What is the purpose of smoke testing?

A. The main purpose of smoke testing is to locate areas where unauthorized water may be entering the sanitary system.

Q. I will not be home during smoke testing and have pets in the house. What should I do?

A. The smoke is not harmful to pets. It would be a good idea to leave several windows partially open for ventilation, in the unlikely event that smoke does enter the building.

Q. Can smoke plug the sewer?

A. There is no way smoke can plug the sewer. The smoke is made up of a vaporized substance.

Q. Where does the smoke appear?

A. Smoke may be seen coming from the roof vents, building foundations, manhole covers or yard cleanouts. Smoke coming from roof vents on the roof of homes is a normal occurrence and indicates to the crews that smoke has filled all sewers.

Q. What happens if you find a bad sewer connector or leak?

A. This information will be documented for further investigation.

Q. Will rodents be smoked out?

A. No. However, the smoke may detect broken building sewers where there is a potential for rodent access. Owners will be notified to repair broken building sewers.