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July 31, 2024

Dear Resident or Property Owner:

This letter is to notify you that the City of Parker is planning to start sanitary sewer smoke testing in your neighborhood within the next few days. The program objective is to identify and remove storm water sources from the sanitary sewer system and keep sanitary sewer rates low.

Smoke testing is a standard method of detecting sewer line 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 connections, cracks, leaks, etc. along the way. This quickly reveals sources of infiltration within the study area. See the attached Smoke Testing FAQ for commonly asked questions about this process.

The City of Parker, Public Works Department will be performing the smoke testing. The smoke used for smoke testing is non-toxic and non-hazardous and is manufactured specifically for this purpose. It leaves no residuals or stains and has no effects on plants or animals. The smoke should not enter your building, but if it does, it will have a distinct odor and should only last a few minutes with proper ventilation. Both the City of Parker Police and Fire Departments will be notified prior to testing.

Please note, all plumbing fixtures drain traps must be filled with water prior to smoke testing. Please perform the following tasks to ensure smoke does not enter your home:

Important instructions for residents prior to smoke testing:

1. Make sure all drain traps and plumbing fixtures have water in them. Fill seldom used drains (such as basement floor drains, garage sinks, etc.) with water by running the faucet for 30-60 seconds or filling the drain with approximately three cups of water.
2. Prepare drains as soon as you receive this notice, this only needs to be done once before testing begins
3. You do not need to be home during the smoke testing
4. Smoke should not enter your home; however, if it does this could be an indication of a defect in your plumbing system. This defect could allow sewer gases to enter inside your home, which is a potential health hazard. Corrections of such defects on private property are the responsibility of the property owner, and a licensed plumber should be consulted to ensure the proper corrections are made. If smoke does enter your home or building, please notify city staff conducting the test or call 469-853-8678.

The information gathered during the smoke testing will be used to create a prioritized plan to reduce infiltration impacts to the sanitary sewer system. Sewer defects will exist on both public and private property and will need to be corrected in a timely manner. After the smoke testing is completed, notices will be sent to those property owners that will need to make corrections. Often times, it can be as simple as removing a connected roof downspout and letting it drain above ground, or replacing a broken or missing lateral cleanout cap in your yard.

We appreciate your patience and understanding and will make every effort to minimize any inconvenience or disruption this testing may have on you. If you have any further questions or concerns regarding smoke testing, please call 469-853-8678 or email – [gmachado@parkertexas.us](mailto:gmachado@parkertexas.us)

Sincerely,

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## **SMOKE TESTING FAQs:**

### **Q: How does Smoke Testing work?**

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.

As long as openings exist for the smoke to follow, smoke tests are effective, regardless of surface type, soil type and depth of lines.

### **Q: Why does the City of Parker Smoke test?**

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

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

No, provided that your plumbing 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?**

No, this process has been safely used for more than 30 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?**

Contact a field crew member working in the area, or call the Public Works Director at (469) 853-8678. Open windows for ventilation. The smoke will soon dissipate.

### **Q. What is the purpose of smoke testing?**

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

### **Q. 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, in the unlikely event that smoke does enter the building.

### **Q. Can smoke plug the sewer?**

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

### **Q. Where does the smoke appear?**

Smoke may be seen coming from 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?**

This information will be documented for further investigation.