



# Fast Facts About Smoke Testing

Oconee County Water Resources Department

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## What is smoke testing and why is it used?

Smoke testing is a cost-effective way to locate defects in the main sewer line and the service lateral that connects the home to the main line. Many cities and counties implement smoke testing programs to assess the condition of their sanitary sewer systems. Smoke testing is the process of injecting artificially-produced smoke into a blocked off pipeline segment and observing where the smoke emerges. If the sewer is in good condition, the forced smoke will emerge from manhole lids along the line and house vents on the roof. If the line has defects, the smoke will escape through any breaks.



## Is the smoke used for testing harmful?

The smoke utilized during smoke testing is commonly used in the industry, and is not harmful to people, pets, or plants. It will not harm or stain clothes, curtains, or furniture. It is not flammable and does not create a fire hazard. If there are individuals in your home who have respiratory problems and are immobile, please notify us at 706-769-3960 prior to testing.



## Will smoke enter my house?

Probably not, but it is possible that smoke could enter a residence through a drain trap which has dried out or some other plumbing defect such as an un-trapped washing machine drain, cracked pipe, garbage disposal, or dishwasher that was not installed correctly.

Note: If smoke can enter your home, dangerous sewer gases can, as well.

## I'm not going to be home, but I have pets in the house. What should I do?

The smoke is not harmful to pets, but you can place your pet in an area of the home that has no plumbing, or leave windows cracked for good ventilation. If your plumbing is properly connected and all the drain traps are sealed, there should not be any problems.



### Can smoke testing activate smoke alarms?

Yes, smoke alarms may be activated during smoke testing if some smoke enters your home. If this happens, open windows and doors for ventilation. If you are not sure or have any doubts about whether the smoke may be from an actual fire, call 911.

## What can I do to prepare for smoke testing?

Running water through any rarely used drains will fill the drain trap and help prevent smoke from entering your home.

### If my drains are filled, and smoke still is coming in my house, what should I do?

This may indicate that your internal plumbing is not working properly. Report smoke entering your home to the crew conducting the test. You should consider calling a plumber, but repairs to your internal plumbing are at your discretion.



## Will the contractors doing the smoke testing be recognizable in the field?

Both contractors and county personnel will be in uniform and driving vehicles with the company name. They will not ask to enter your home.



For questions about smoke testing, please visit the Oconee County Water Resources Department online at [www.oconeecounty.com/water](http://www.oconeecounty.com/water) or call 706-769-3960.