

County to start smoke testing sewers next week

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Starting next week, York County's Division of Utilities will start blowing smoke.

The non-toxic, non-staining, odorless smoke is the key component of a sewer system test the Department of Environmental Quality mandates that the county conduct.

The purpose of the testing is to locate any breaks or defects in the county sewer system. By blowing smoke through the sewers, technicians can pinpoint breaks or faults in the line by monitoring where the smoke leaks out.

"The smoke is not harmful to humans or animals, and will dissipate within a few minutes of its release, but we really need to let the public know this is going to happen so that they don't panic if they start seeing smoke either in their house or coming from holes in the ground," said Brian Woodward, Chief of Utilities for York County.

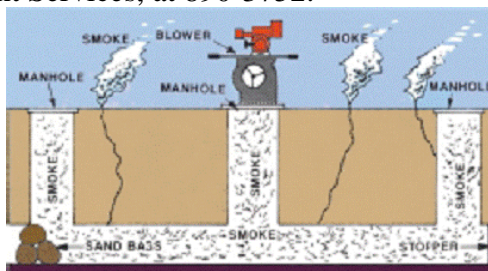
Though the smoke itself is harmless, if residents see it in their house, they have a different problem.

"If smoke is getting into your house, then so are the gases and odors from the sanitary sewer collection system," Woodward said. "These gases and odors are harmful. But if your plumbing was installed correctly and has no defects or cracked pipes, you should not get any smoke in your house."

If residents do get smoke in their house, they are advised to open windows and doors to ventilate the smoke and then immediately contact a plumber to check their plumbing. Before the county starts the testing, residents are asked to pour water into all floor drains, showers, bathtubs and sinks, and to flush all toilets. This will seal all drain traps so that smoke will not enter a residence unless there is a true problem with the plumbing.

The county will start the smoke testing in the Crestwood service area of Brandywine on or around Thursday, Oct. 22. Letters are being mailed to residents alerting them to the testing, and door hangers will be distributed in neighborhoods scheduled for testing advising residents of their exact testing date.

For more information on the smoke testing, please call the Division of Utilities, Department of Environmental and Development Services, at 890-3752.





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