

NOTICE

SEWER LINE SMOKE TESTING

MANHOLE ENTRY AND FLOW MEASUREMENT

During **late March or April (weather dependent)** field crews from **JM Davidson Engineering, D.P.C.** will be conducting smoke testing of the sanitary sewer system in your neighborhood. Smoke testing is a standard method of detecting defects in the sewer system. The process involves placing a high-capacity blower on top of a sanitary manhole and blowing "smoke" into the sewer system. The smoke will then escape the sewer system through pipe connections, leaks or cracks in the pipes, or low vents in the system. You may see field crews in the area during the testing opening manholes, walking through the neighborhood – including your yard, taking photographs, and documenting the smoke sightings. During this same timeframe, staff from **TECsmith, Inc.** will be performing sanitary sewer flow measurement during the hours of **midnight to 6am** to identify potential sources of groundwater infiltration. TEC Smith's field crews will be opening and entering sanitary sewer manholes located primarily in the street.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the smoke hazardous?

The smoke that is used is non-toxic, non-staining, harmless, white to gray in color, and has no odor. It does not create a fire hazard.

What should I do if smoke gets into my home?

If smoke enters your home during testing, please notify the field crew performing the testing outside. Open windows and doors to allow ventilation of the smoke. Note the location of where the smoke is entering your home. Smoke inside could indicate faulty plumbing or cracked seals. If smoke enters your home, the smoke detector may sound. The smoke will clear quickly once the blower has been turned off.

Do I need to be home during the test?

No, you do not need to be home. Our field crews will not need to enter your home or business. Field crews will be in the neighborhood documenting the smoke with photos and may walk through your property and near your home.

What if I have pets home alone during the testing?

The smoke is not harmful to humans or pets. It may be a good idea to leave a window partially cracked in the event that smoke does enter your home, so that it will dissipate quickly. If you have proper plumbing connections and all of the drain traps have water in them, there should be no smoke entering your home.

How should I prepare for the smoke testing?

Drain traps should always be filled with water to prevent sewer gases from entering your home. However, if you have a seasonal home or other infrequently used drain line, there is the potential that the drain trap has dried out. It is advisable to pour 1 gallon of water into each floor or sink drain, filling the traps with water to prevent smoke from entering the home. This only needs to be done once prior to the testing. If smoke does enter your home, you should consult a licensed plumber. The smoke could be an indication of faulty plumbing.

SEWER LINE SMOKE TESTING & FLOW MEASUREMENT

What is the benefit of performing a smoke test?

Smoke testing is one method of identifying sections of sewer that may have the potential for additional water inflow into the sanitary system during rain events. Runoff and groundwater can enter the system through cracks or leaks in the pipe, loose pipe fittings, storm drain collection system connections, roof downspouts, or foundation drain connections. Excess sources of rainfall inflow to the sewer can overflow the system leading to surcharging manholes or treatment problems at the wastewater treatment plant. Identifying these connections helps the determine the best course of action for sanitary repairs, upgrades, or replacement projects.



Will I be notified about sewer leaks at my house?

If smoke is detected at your property, a report documenting the smoke sighting will be issued to the NFWB which is responsible for your sanitary sewer system. The NFWB may be in contact with you at a later date to discuss potential repairs that may be needed to your sanitary connections. Contact the NFWB for further information.



How will the field crews be identified?

Field crews from JM Davidson Engineering, D.P.C. and TECsmith, Inc. will be wearing high visible safety gear with our logo visible. In addition, additional personnel from the NFWB may be present with NFWB vehicles.

Is there a website with more information?

Yes, Hurco Technologies manufactures the smoke testing equipment being used during this test. You can find further safety documentation, including photos and videos of the smoke testing process at on their website at: <https://www.hurcotech.com/ripcord-smoker>



Why is flow measurement being performed from midnight to 6 am?

The purpose of this field activity is to quantify the amount of groundwater entering the sanitary sewer through cracks and other defects. To isolate flows contributed from groundwater sources only, this work is conducted when most residents are not using plumbing devices that contribute to sanitary sewer flow.

Once specific test dates are determined, they will be posted at NFWB.org/news and announced through the City of Niagara Falls Text Alert system – if you are not already registered for the Text Alert system, you can sign up by texting **RESIDENT** to **716-FALLS-23 (716-325-5723)**

Questions?

Jaime Davidson
JM Davidson Engineering, D.P.C.
716.912.1423
jdavidson@jmdavidsoneng.com
www.jmdavidsoneng.com

Dan Seider
Arcadis
716.667.6670
Daniel.Seider@arcadis.com
www.arcadis.com

Ethan Smith
TECsmith
716.462.0382
tecsmithinc@outlook.com
tecsmithinc.com