



## CITY OF SUMMERVILLE

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City of Summerville will be conducting a routine smoke testing of the sewer system on September 23, 2019.

Please be aware that we cannot confirm the exact time of when our crews will be testing in a particular location.

Smoke testing is a simple means of locating defects in sewer mains and service laterals that allow rainfall runoff or ground water to enter the sanitary sewer collection system. Locating and correcting these defects helps conserve the available capacity of the wastewater collection system, lift stations and treatment facility.

Smoke testing is done by introducing non-toxic smoke along with large volumes of air through an open sanitary sewer manhole. Smoke will appear around nearby manhole lids and from the ground above defects in sewer mains and sewer service laterals. Smoke will also appear where there are cross connections to the storm sewer system. Smoke should not be observed inside a building unless the building has inadequate plumbing or dried-up drain traps (such as the P-trap under a sink). Please ensure that your drain traps are air tight by periodically pouring a few cups of water down each drain that is infrequently used, including sinks, laundry room floor drains, bathtubs, showers, unused washing machine drains, etc. Smoke coming out of plumbing vent roof stacks is completely normal and is not a cause for alarm. If the plumbing system of your residence/business is adequate and all drain traps are full of water, smoke should not be seen indoors.

Although a rare occurrence, smoke observed indoors during our testing indicates that a plumbing deficiency is allowing unpleasant and potentially hazardous gasses from the sanitary sewer system to enter the building. Plumbing deficiencies that may cause this situation include:

- Vents connected to the building's sewer lateral are inadequate, defective, or improperly installed.
- Traps under sinks, tubs, basins, showers, floor drains, etc. are dry, defective, improperly installed, or missing.
- Pipes, connections, and seals of the building's sewer system are damaged, defective, have plugs missing, or are improperly installed.
- Caps for sewer lateral cleanouts are broken or missing.

Smoke testing is a process endorsed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and has been safely used for more than 20 years to evaluate sanitary sewer collections systems. The "smoke" is not true smoke but rather a specially-formulated mist that is made up mostly of moisture from the atmosphere. The mist is non-toxic, has no ill effects on humans, animals and plants, does not create a fire hazard, and leaves no residual odors, dust or stains. The mist may have a weak but not unpleasant odor. This odor is distinctive and does not smell like the smoke produced from



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burning materials. Any visible mist indoors will dissipate within a few minutes with adequate ventilation. Mist dissipation can be accelerated by opening windows and using ceiling fans.

City of Summerville strongly advises that any source of smoke within a building be located, identified, and corrected by a licensed plumber in accordance with local codes. The correction of any defects in building plumbing systems or in sewer pipes that are on private property is entirely the responsibility of the property owner.

If a deficiency is discovered on private property that allows storm water or debris to enter the sanitary sewer collection system, the location of the deficiency will be indicated with white flags, white marking paint, or a combination of the two.

The customer and/or property owner may also be verbally notified of the deficiency by City of Summerville personnel. In the coming weeks, City of Summerville will follow up with written notification as well.

Failure to correct the deficiency within a period agreed upon between City of Summerville and the customer/property owner is a violation of City of Summerville's policies of service and the City of Summerville's ordinances. This could result in interruptions of water/sewer service and/or charges levied to the customer/property owner to reimburse City of Summerville for performing the work.

If you have any question, please contact The City of Summerville at (706) 859-0900.