

Preparing For Smoke Testing

How should I prepare for smoke testing?

The smoke should not enter your house or business unless defective plumbing exists or drain traps are dry. Please pour about 1 gallon of water in every drain including floor drains. This is especially important for drains that have not been used for a long period of time. Look for floor drains that may be under mats, carpets, appliances or furniture. It is not uncommon to find a floor drain under carpet in a lower level family room or under a washing machine.

If you have a sump pump or a downspout from your rooftop connected to the sewer system, disconnect it and drain it into your yard or street. These connections are illegal and will allow dangerous sewer gases to enter your home or business. **Remember, all sewer gases are dangerous and many have no odor.**

Your presence is not required during the tests, and all public safety authorities have been notified of this event. At no time will field crews have to enter your residence. However, should a smoke source be visible on your property, the field crews will likely need to enter the property to investigate and log the source.

The smoke is nontoxic, leaves no residue, and creates no fire hazard. The smoke which is about 50% atmospheric moisture and has a slight odor similar to burning paper and may cause minor throat irritation if inhaled. However, persons with respiratory conditions such as asthma, bronchitis or emphysema should be careful when exposed to smoke of any kind. Should you have any health concerns, please feel free to call us at (301)373-4733.

What do I do if smoke enters my home or business?

Even though the smoke product Metcom is using is laboratory tested safe, the sewer gases that are traveling with the smoke can be extremely dangerous potentially causing serious health concerns. If smoke should enter your home or business during the testing, take the following precautions:

1. Immediately open several windows in your home or business. Ventilate with a fan if you have one available.
2. Quickly leave your residence and contact the testing personnel in your neighborhood. You should be able to find us within 2 or 3 blocks of your home or business.

3. If you choose to call Metcom instead, please call (301)373-4733 from a neighboring house or business, or outside on your cell phone.
4. If you are unsure if the smoke is from the tests being done in your neighborhood, it could be a real fire, call 911 immediately! Smoke from a fire usually has a strong smell and a grayer color. The smoke product that Metcom is using is nontoxic, leaves no residue, and creates no fire hazard and is white in color.
5. If smoke enters your house during the test, it is likely that sewer gases have been entering the house as well. It would be advisable to call a licensed plumber to repair any defective plumbing detected during this project.

Will my smoke alarm be activated if smoke enters my house?

Yes, but don't be alarmed. Follow the above procedures. When the smoke clears the alarm will usually stop. If you are connected to an emergency service, the local emergency personnel will be notified. If this happens, determine if the smoke is from the smoke testing project. If it is, contact your security service and tell them it was a false alarm. IF YOU ARE UNSURE about the origin of the smoke, let them continue with their normal emergency procedures.

What happens if I do have a sewer problem?

Metcom will contact you within a short period of time with instructions on what you need to do. If the smoke is outside your home or business, wait for these instructions. If the smoke is in your home, notify Metcom or the testing personnel immediately! **Remember, all sewer gases are dangerous and many have no odor. Fix your problem right away.**