



**GRANITE FALLS**

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## Sewer System Smoke Testing

An important part of the City's Sewer System maintenance program is finding and fixing cracks, breaks, and other problems with sewer lines. City staff use's smoke testing to locate cracks in pipes. Smoke testing involves using a device to inject a harmless smoke into sewer manholes, then monitoring to see where the smoke escapes.

It is normal for smoke to come out of sewer vent pipes on roofs of homes and buildings, this does not indicate a problem. However, if smoke emerges from storm drains or rises from lawns, sidewalks, or the street, that does indicate a problem, such as a cracked pipe, damaged manhole, or connection with a storm drain, etc. Our crews will note the location and schedule appropriate repair.

Please note before conducting smoke testing, the City will notify the fire department.

### What to Expect during Smoke Testing

Smoke is supposed to escape through sewer vent pipes on roofs. These vent pipes are connected to your sewer plumbing to allow sewer gases to vent outside.

Occasionally, the harmless smoke will enter a home. This indicates there is a problem with the sewer plumbing in the home. If smoke enters the home, that means sewer gases are also entering the home. Please contact the City's waste water treatment plant if you have smoke entering your home for further recommendations at (360) 691-7432.

### Why is Smoke Testing Necessary?

The sewer system was designed to collect waste from homes and businesses, **not** rain water or ground water. When rain or ground water enters the sewer system through cracked pipes, it takes up needed capacity in the sewer system, especially during heavy rain events. In severe cases, this can potentially cause sewer system overflows, which are an environmental and public health hazard.

To prevent this unwanted infiltration and inflow into the sewer system, we try to find and fix problems with sewer pipes and manholes that allow entry. Problems such as root intrusion, deterioration of aging pipes, and mistaken connection of storm water pipes to sewer lines.

Thank you for your patience as we work to maintain and improve vital infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Lyle Bjornson  
Waste Water Treatment Plant Supervisor  
Public Works  
City of Granite Falls  
(360) 691-7432