

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When will the smoke test be performed at my address?

Smoke testing is performed Monday thru Friday between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. On days when it is raining, smoke testing is not performed. Prior to testing, you will receive a notice to inform you when testing will take place in your area. The date on the notification indicates the earliest we will be in your neighborhood. Smoke testing may occur any time in the 15 business day period following the date on this notice. Unfortunately, we are not able to pinpoint the exact time of testing at your address.

I have respiratory problems; do I need to contact you?

Only persons who have respiratory problems and are immobile should contact the City of Boulder at 303-441-3214 prior to the start of testing.

Is it normal for the pipe vent on my roof to smoke during the test?

Yes.

Will smoke enter every home?

No. Smoke intrusion into the home is uncommon. If smoke enters your home, it is indicative of deficiencies in your plumbing system that may be allowing harmful sewer gases to enter as well.

Is the smoke harmful to my pets?

The smoke is caused by heating a mineral oil and is non-toxic to animals as well as humans. However, it is smoke and can make it difficult to breathe. If someone is not home to ventilate the home in the event of smoke intrusion, it is recommended that you close bathroom doors (and other rooms where you have sinks or drains) and open windows while you are away. This will help to minimize the spread of smoke through the home. Do not confine your pets to rooms with drains, sinks or toilets.

Why did smoke enter my home?

The most common cause for smoke entering home is due to a dry plumbing trap (see figure). A trap is required by the state plumbing code to prevent sewer gases from entering the home. The trap is a constructed sag in the drain pipe which "traps" water, thereby creating an impenetrable barrier for sewer gases. Water can evaporate from a trap in sinks and other drains that are used infrequently. It is recommended that you pour water in unused drains prior to smoke testing to replenish the water in the trap. Other causes for smoke entering the home can be from a bad seal around toilets or other plumbing deficiencies.

