



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Don Moore, Utilities Supervisor
(707) 944-2988
dmoore@yountville.com

Subject: Smoke Testing Sewers in Yountville

The Town plans to conduct what is referred to as “smoke testing” between late November (after Thanksgiving) and January, weather permitting. This is a process in which a special non-toxic smoke is introduced into the sewer collection system through the manholes located in the street. The Town periodically conducts these tests on the sewer collection system to assess the integrity of the system by locating cracks, breaks, off-set joints, illegal connections and other problems before they become major issues. Once problems are identified, then property owners are notified to repair problems on their property or projects are constructed to fix problems in the Town maintained part of the system.

Every winter, the sewer flows to the Wastewater Treatment Plant can increase by over five times the amount during the summer. These higher flows are directly related to what is known as inflow and infiltration. Inflow is the direct flow of stormwater from rain events and from residential drains, roof downspouts and open pipes with missing or damaged caps throughout the system. Infiltration is water that makes its way into the sewer collection system by way of cracks, breaks, tree root intrusion and off-set joints in the piping network under ground. All of which is extra water that unnecessarily goes through the treatment process. By reducing the amount of this extra water from making its way to the collection system and the treatment plant, the Town can keep treatment costs lower while also reducing the chances for overflows or sewer back-ups into homes or businesses.

The most effective way to locate these unseen problems is by the use of smoke testing followed by video camera work to see how to fix the problems. To fix problems in the Town maintained system, contractors will do slip-lining (where a new pipe is pulled through the existing pipe), a

“point repair” (this is similar to an industrial strength permanent band aid applied to a small crack or break without major excavation), or complete pipe replacement.

Because the pipes in your house or business are connected to the pipes in the street, smoke can enter your building in the following situations:

- Vents connected to your building’s sewer lateral are defective or improperly installed.
- P-traps under sinks, bathtubs, showers and other drains are dry. (Not due to defects in installation or manufacture)
- Pipes, connections and/or seals of the wastewater drain system in and under buildings are damaged, defective, have plugs missing, or are improperly installed.

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Crews will be in neighborhoods before the smoke testing starts to let people know when to expect the testing in the area. At that time, please let Town staff know any concerns or ask any questions regarding the smoke test. Even though the smoke is non-toxic and will not harm people, animals or plants, there are several precautions to take.

- If someone has respiratory problems, it is recommended that they remain outside of the home or business until the testing is complete (approximately 5-10 minutes).
- If you leave animals in the home while away during the day, do not lock them in the bathroom during the test, as this is where issues are mainly found due to poor wax ring seals around toilets.
- Leave a couple of windows open to allow any smoke to exit nearly as fast as it enters.

Very rarely does smoke enter the homes or buildings during tests like these. In the event that smoke is encountered, it is an indication that something is in need of further investigation. If the smoke makes its way into the home, then dangerous sewer gases and odors could also enter the home. This smoke testing is one of the best ways in which to find and remedy these potential problems. Crews will be looking for smoke and will be able to assist in answering any questions that may arise the day of the testing or to address concerns. If people have questions before and/or after the test, they should call the **Utilities Division @ (707) 944-2988 or by email @ dmoore@yville.com or Town Hall @ (707) 944-8851.**

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