

Sewer Smoke Testing

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the smoke testing being done?

The smoke testing will identify any faulty pipelines, water problems and leaks. It is a very cost efficient and effective way to see if unauthorised water is entering the sewage system. Council will schedule necessary maintenance works based on findings of the smoke testing.

How is the smoke testing carried out?

Smoke and air will be pumped into sewer pipes one street at a time so Council inspection crews can monitor where smoke escapes the pipes which indicates faults or leaks.

Can the smoke harm me?

No. The smoke may make you cough but will disappear after a couple of minutes. It is harmless, non-toxic, non-staining and does not create a fire hazard.

If smoke testing is happening in my area what do I need to do to prepare for it?

If you receive notice that smoke testing will take place, you should:

1. Check that all drain traps (S-bends) under basins, washing facilities and floor drains contain water by simply flushing toilets, running the shower and running or pouring water into all drains.
2. If there is an individual in your home or business who has respiratory problems or mobility limitations, please call Council on 1300 ISAACS (1300 47 22 27) immediately
3. Please tie up any dogs or dangerous pets in the event that Isaac Regional Council representatives need to access your property.


What does it mean if smoke enters my house?

Smoke shouldn't enter your home from the sewer pipes provided your house plumbing is secure. If smoke does enter your property, it may mean your drainage system is defective and requires further inspection by a licensed person.

Where would smoke enter my home?

As plumbing fixtures in your home are connected to the sewer system, smoke will only enter your property if the drains aren't connected properly. This happens if:

- The vents connected your building's sewer pipes are inadequate, defective or not properly installed

- 
- The traps under sinks, tubs, basins, showers and other drains are dry, defective or not properly installed
 - The pipe connections or seals in the wastewater drain system in or under your building are damaged, defective, have plugs missing or are improperly installed

Do I need to be home if smoke testing is being done in my street?

No. If Council inspection crews notice your drainage system is defective, you will receive a notice to have it repaired by a licensed person. It is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain private plumbing connections.

What should I do if smoke gets into my house?

If smoke enters your property, please follow these steps:

1. Don't be alarmed
2. Open windows to allow ventilation and note the location of the smoke emission; smoke will clear in a few minutes
3. Exit the building and notify Council inspection crews in the area

If you are in any way unsure about the cause of the smoke, please phone triple 000 immediately.

Why do you recommend evacuating if the smoke isn't harmful?

We recommend evacuating as a precautionary measure in case the smoke is due to a real fire rather than a test.

Is it normal to see any smoke at my property?

It is normal for you to notice smoke coming from the external drainage vents in your roof – this means that smoke has filled all the sewers and doesn't indicate any leaks.

For more information please call Isaac Regional Council on 1300 ISAACS (1300 47 22 27).