

Orange Water and Sewer Authority

A public, non-profit agency providing water, sewer and reclaimed water services to the Carrboro-Chapel Hill community.

NEWS RELEASE August 30, 2010

OWASA will test several sewers with non-toxic smoke starting on Tuesday through Friday

From Tuesday, August 31st through Friday, September 3rd, OWASA will test sewers at some individual locations on the following streets by putting non-toxic smoke into them.

Windsor Circle
Weaver Dairy Road
Severin Street
Bradley Road
Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Mount Bolus Road
Markham Drive
Longleaf Drive
Homestead Road
Cedar Hills Circle
Granville Towers East
McMasters Street

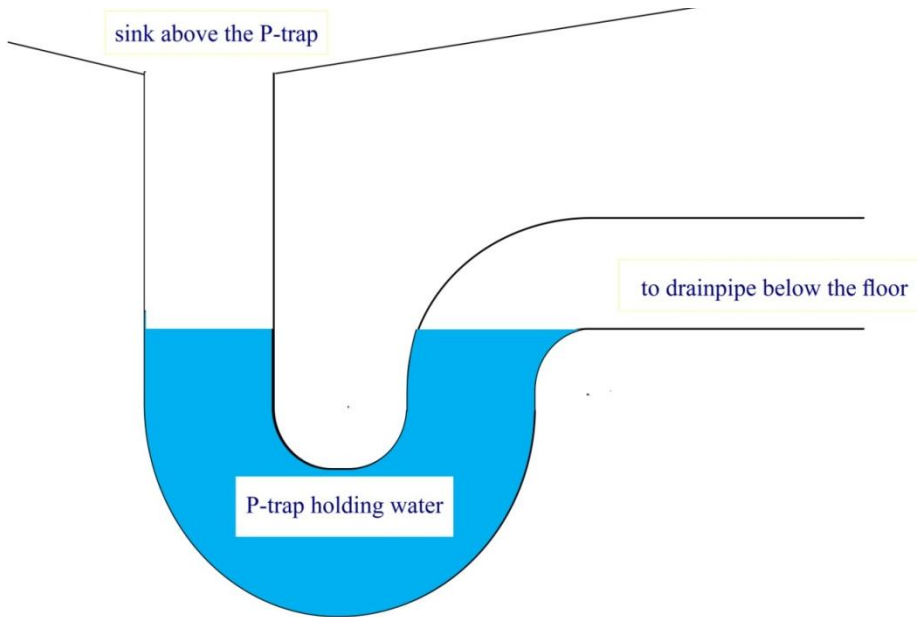
The smoke testing will indicate locations where there are leaks or other openings in OWASA sewers and in private service lines that drain to the sanitary sewer system. For example, smoke testing will show the location of private service lines that do not have a cap on the maintenance access pipe (or “cleanout”) in the service lateral.

The smoke testing may also show the location of storm drains that are connected (improperly) to OWASA’s sanitary sewer system, and unauthorized sewer connections.

Residents may see smoke from OWASA’s testing come out of plumbing system vent pipes that normally extend through the roof of a house or other building. This is expected and does not indicate a problem in the plumbing system

The smoke from OWASA’s testing should not get into the interior of a house or other building. However, smoke from the testing can get into the interior of a house if a “P-trap” under a sink, floor drain or built into a toilet is not filled with water due to lack of use for an extended time. Smoke may also enter a home if there are cracks or loose fittings in the home plumbing drains. Customers who believe a p-trap is dry should run water in the sink, flush the toilet to fill the p-trap with water or pour water down the floor drain. (This is a recommended practice at all times to prevent gas from the sewer system from rising out of sinks, floor drains, etc.)

A P-trap looks like this [if this e-mail does not include a graphic below when you receive it, please reply with a brief note if you want to receive the P-trap illustration in a pdf format]:



OWASA has informed the Chapel Hill Fire Department and the County 911 center of its plans for smoke testing. OWASA, the Fire Departments and Orange County advise customers to call 911 if they are uncertain about whether smoke is from OWASA's testing or an actual fire.

[For more information](#)

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