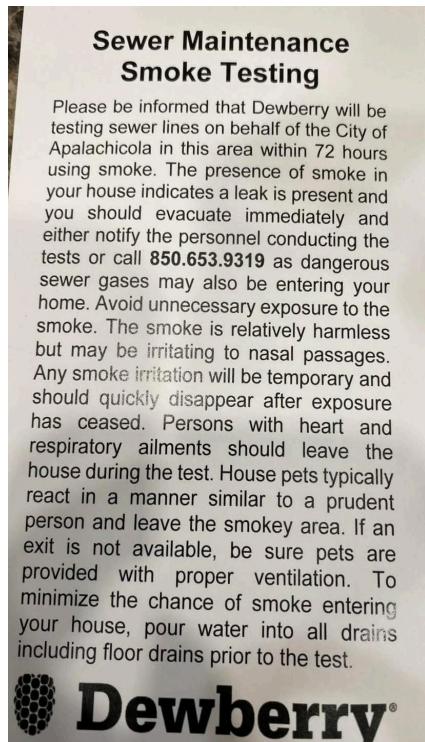


Fact Sheet

Smoke Testing of gravity-fed sewer lines in Apalachicola

September 11, 2025

What's happening?



For the next several weeks, Dewberry will be performing maintenance checks on the gravity-fed sewer lines. If you are in the area where testing has or will occur, you should have gotten this flier (left) in your mailbox or hung on your front door.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dewberry at this number:

(850) 653-9319

What is smoke testing? Smoke testing is a common way to find leaks and damaged connections in sewer lines. It is a cost effective and accurate way to help locate places where groundwater or surface water can enter the lines. By finding and fixing the leaks and

damage, our waste water system will stop treating “non wastewater.” This increases wastewater treatment efficiency and saves wear and tear on the system.

Smoke testing involves pumping non-toxic smoke (similar to smoke used at live concerts and plays) through the sewer lines and locating the places where the smoke exits. The smoke shows areas with broken sewer pipes, manholes, catch basins, or where roof or foundation drains are connected to the sewer system. These are the locations where water can enter from outside of the system and that need to be repaired.

To keep smoke from entering buildings, run water faucets for a few seconds in unused sinks, tubs and drains to make sure fixture traps are filled. Pour water into each

floor drain (at least a gallon). This creates a small pool of water in the fixture trap that blocks the smoke. [If a building remains vacant for months, property owners should do this regularly anyway to keep the potential of sewer gas entering home.]

Is the smoke hazardous? The smoke will not cause a fire or explosion and isn't hazardous or flammable. As noted previously, this "smoke" is similar to what is used at concerts and other live events.

On the off chance that smoke enters a building, it should disappear quickly. However, people should avoid unnecessary exposure to the smoke. Opening doors and windows for 15 minutes or so should remove the smoke. In the unlikely chance that exposure occurs for a long while, people might experience some throat and skin irritation. Pets can have the same symptoms. The smoke will not stain or leave residue on surfaces.

How long does smoke testing take? For a single city block, smoke testing takes about 30 minutes. Residents may see the simulated smoke emerging from manhole covers, storm drains, roof vents or building foundations.



If there is a leak or damage in the system, something like the smoke in this picture might be observed during a test.

Source: <https://www.sehinc.com/insights/8-questions-your-residents-will-have-about-smoke-testing>

What is the schedule? All of 25th and half of 24 Avenues were completed this week. Testing should resume on Tuesday, September 16th. The testing will take one to two months to complete.

Dewberry will provide weekly progress reports.



Locations where smoke testing will occur. These are the gravity-fed portions of the sewer lines.
Source: Dewberry "Apalachicola [sic] I&I Sewer Map" July 2025.