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**RE: Sanitary Sewer Smoke Testing
Frequently Asked Questions**

Dear Valued Customers:

The Emerald Valley Wastewater Company will be conducting smoke testing of the sanitary sewer system on **Thursday, May 4, and Friday, May 5, 2023**. Please find below for frequently asked questions related to smoke testing:

1. What is the purpose of smoke testing?

A sanitary sewer system is designed to convey wastewater generated from your property to the wastewater treatment facility. In dry weather, it usually does so without issue. However, in wet weather, rain and stormwater runoff from buildings, streets and the ground may enter into the sewer system, resulting in an increased volume of flow the system may not be designed to handle. Smoke testing is one of the most cost-effective ways to locate defects in the sewer system. Many cities and municipalities across the US implement smoke testing programs to assess the condition of the sanitary sewer system.

2. What is a smoke test?

High-capacity blowers are used to pump smoke into a manhole and smoke is pushed into the system and emerges from cracks in the sidewalk and at a downstream manhole. Smoke testing is the process of injecting artificially produced smoke into a blocked-off pipeline segment to see where the smoke emerges. If the sewer is in good condition, then the forced smoke will emerge from manhole lids along the line and house vents on the roof. If the line has defects, the smoke will find the break and try to escape through the break. It is not unusual to see smoke come up from peculiar places, such as cracks in the street, or in residential yards during smoke testing. While the smoke is being injected into the sewers, utility crew members will observe the smoke test area and notate the places smoke escapes.

3. Is the smoke hazardous?

The smoke utilized during smoke testing is commonly used in the industry. The smoke is not harmful to you, your pets, or house plants. It will not harm or stain clothes, drapes, or furniture. It is not flammable and does not create a fire hazard. While the smoke is not

considered harmful, it is recommended to avoid prolonged periods of exposure. If smoke appears from a drain inside your residence, open windows and ventilate well to dissipate the smoke.

4. Will I have smoke coming into my house?

Probably not, but it is possible that smoke could enter a residence through a drain trap that has dried out or some other plumbing defect such as an un-trapped washing machine drain, cracked pipe, garbage disposal or dishwasher not installed correctly. Please note that if smoke can enter your home, then dangerous sewer gases can also. If smoke gets inside your home, please locate one of the smoke testing crew members and they will assist you in locating where the smoke entered your home.

5. I see smoke in my front yard and venting out my neighbor's roof.

That may indicate a break or other defect in the sewer line. A defect in an underground sewer pipe is allowing smoke to escape up through the ground. Roof vents are where the smoke should be released or seen.

6. I don't see any smoke at all.

This may be good. If the sanitary sewer line is in a state of good condition, the smoke will migrate along the sewer network and appear at a distant manhole or some other area. The utility crew expects to observe smoke, such as the sewer vent pipe on top of a residence. But in some cases, the smoke doesn't reappear at all. Since it must go somewhere, then a process of investigation and research begins to try and determine where the smoke is ending up.

7. Should I do anything to prepare?

The possibility exists for smoke to enter a residence due to infrequently used drains or a defect in the sewer pipes. A drain trap is the S-shaped curvature or elbow in the pipe typically found under sinks, which exists to capture and hold water in the trap's curve. This water in the trap creates a type of seal and blocks gases from rising through the drain and into the home. This trap will also keep the smoke from entering your home. A dry drain trap could be found in drains that are not used regularly and the water has evaporated. *Water should be run in these isolated areas monthly to maintain the drain seal in proper operating condition.*

8. Do I have to be home when smoke testing is performed?

Homeowners do not need to be home and at no time will a utility crew member need to enter your home.

9. Can the smoke activate my smoke alarm?

Yes, smoke alarms may be activated during smoke testing if smoke enters your home. If it does, open windows and doors for ventilation. If you are not sure or have any doubts about the smoke, please call 911.

10. I'm not going to be home, but I have pets in the house, what should I do?

The smoke is not harmful to pets, but you can place your pet in an area of the home that has no plumbing, like a living room or bedroom. If your plumbing is properly connected and all the drain traps are sealed, there should not be any problems.

Should smoke enter your home or business, you may contact a member of the smoke testing crew working in your area. The crew member will be able to help and check with you as to where the smoke has entered your building. Location, identification, and correction of the source of smoke that enters your building are urgently advised. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Customer Service team at (971) 703-4242 or at customerservice@puttman.com.

Sincerely,

Emerald Valley Wastewater Company