

February 2021

## Sewer mist testing to start soon

Our regular mist testing program is designed to protect the future reliability of our sewerage network and help prevent sewage spills. In the next few weeks, we will be testing in Mortlake, Terang and Camperdown. This information sheet explains the process and answers some frequently asked questions.

### Why are we testing?

In very wet weather, the flows coming through our sewerage treatment plants are much higher than the dry weather flows. This indicates that stormwater is entering the sewerage network - either due to leaks or illegal connections.

The system is not designed to accommodate stormwater or rainwater which can overload the system and cause spills. It's therefore important we find out where this water is coming from.

The problem often occurs in low-lying areas of our sewerage network which is sometimes flooded in winter. We've scheduled the mist testing at this time of year when the ground is dry and it's easier to locate the sewer access points.

### How does the testing work?

We regularly perform CCTV inspections of our sewerage network to assess the condition of the pipes. However, this process does not show where stormwater may be getting in. Instead, we engage contractors to conduct mist testing.

In each section of the network, they'll set up at a sewer access point to blow a harmless mist into the pipes and then monitor where it escapes the system.

Under pressure, the mist moves through the pipes and connections to disperse at roof vents on houses and buildings. This is normal and indicates to the crews that the mist has filled all the sewers.

The mist should not appear inside homes unless the plumbing is faulty.

If it comes up from the ground, it indicates something is wrong, such as a broken pipe or defective connection.

### What are we looking for?

The mist testing program is a quick and cost-effective way of allowing us to discover:

- Points where groundwater or surface water may be entering the sewer, such as where sewer access point covers are cracked or poorly sealed
- Cross-connections between sewers and stormwater drains
- Defective sewer connections.





## Is the mist harmful?

The mist looks similar to smoke but is actually a clean, odourless substance that is harmless to humans, pets, food, and material goods.

The mist testing will coincide with the fire season in Victoria. We advise emergency services and local councils that we are conducting tests to avoid unnecessary call-outs.

Mist testing will not occur on days of Total Fire Ban. If in doubt about a potential fire, we encourage you to contact emergency services and check the VicEmergency App.

Where possible, we'll provide updates to the mist testing schedules in our Facebook and Instagram pages.

## Which areas will be tested?

The program will begin in Mortlake where most of the town's network will be tested.

The contractors will then move onto Terang, concentrating on low-lying areas around the railway line on the northern side of town.

The program will finish in Camperdown with the focus on the catchment that feeds into the Cobden Road sewer pump station.

## Will my property be included?

Our contractors may need to access backyards of properties along the sewer line to complete the testing. If we need to enter your property, you will receive a separate letter giving notice of our intention to do so.

The contractors will wear identification badges and carry a letter of authority from Wannon Water at all times.

## Will sewerage services be affected?

No. The testing will not interrupt any sewerage services provided to customers.

## What will happen after the testing is completed?

We'll take action to fix any problems identified with the sewerage network such as broken covers and pipes.

If the testing identifies any defects or unauthorised connections on a private property, we'll notify the owners in writing and ask them to engage a licensed plumber to fix the problem.

## How can I find out more?

Please call us on 1300 926 666.