



Boston Water and Sewer Commission

980 HARRISON AVENUE • BOSTON, MA 02119 • (617) 989-7000

SEWER CONNECTION DYE TESTING PROGRAM

The Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) will be dye testing your sanitary plumbing to determine if sanitary sewage is entering BWSC's storm drains.

Why is BWSC Conducting Dye Tests?

The storm drain in the street that serves your home discharges to a local river or stream. The dye testing is intended to assure that storm drainage that reaches the waterway is free of sewage.

Where is BWSC Conducting Dye Tests?

The dye testing is being undertaken on your street as well as in other neighborhoods in the city.

How Does a Dye Test Work?

A dye-testing technician will visit your home and ask to enter to conduct the test. The technician will place a small amount of dye in a sink or toilet and run some water to carry the dye through the plumbing in your home and out to the pipes in the street. The technician will ask to look at the plumbing in the basement, to verify if the plumbing in your home flows through one pipe to the street. If there is more than one sewer service connection, a second dye test on that connection will be conducted. Another technician in the street will open a storm drain manhole and a sanitary sewer manhole to determine where the dye appears.

How Long Will the Dye Test Take?

The dye test usually takes approximately 15-20 minutes. This allows enough time for the dye to show up in the pipes in the street and for the technicians to record the results.

Who Will Do the Dye Testing and When?

Dye testing will be conducted Monday through Saturday between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, unless otherwise arranged with the owner. The dye testing will be conducted by BWSC's engineering consultants CH2M HILL and Stacey DePasquale Engineering. Technicians will carry proper photo identification. Do not allow anyone into your home without proper identification.

Is the Dye Safe? Is it a Permanent Dye?

The dye is non-toxic, cleans up with water and will not harm plumbing.

What if I'm not Home?

If you are not home when the dye testing crew comes to test, they will leave information at your home, including a telephone number so that you can call to make an appointment.

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What if the Sanitary Plumbing is Connected to a Storm Drain?

If BWSC determines that your sanitary sewer service is connected to a storm drain, BWSC will make arrangements to redirect the sewer connection to the sanitary sewer. In most cases the correction can be made in the street. After the correction is made the BWSC will need to perform another dye test of your sanitary sewer service to confirm that it is properly connected.

What if I Prefer to Make an Appointment for a Dye Test?

You may make an appointment for a dye test by calling Stacey DePasquale Engineering, toll free, at 877-207-5897 or by emailing the firm at info@sde-inc.com

How Can I Get More Information?

For more information about this program, please feel free to call Amy Schofield, Project Manager, at (617) 989-7432, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. We appreciate your cooperation and support in our effort to improve both the environment and BWSC's sewer system.

Yours truly,


John P. Sullivan, P.E.
Chief Engineer

Detail of Internal Building Dyed Water Test

