

Sewer Gas Smell

*How to Locate and **STOP** Sewer Gas in Your Home or Business*

by : Tim Carter - Master Plumber

Nationally Syndicated Columnist
and
Founder of www.AsktheBuilder.com

First Edition

February 2022 - Plumb Bob Press



(C) Copyright 2022 Tim Carter

All Rights Reserved

This book, either in printed or digital format, has been produced by the author and publisher for your own personal use. It's illegal for you to copy this book and make it available to the public in any format currently available or yet to be invented.

Copyright infringement is a **serious matter** and if you suspect that the copy of the book you're reading right now infringes on the author's copyright, please notify him now via this link:

<http://go.askthebuilder.com/copyrightinfringement>

ISBN - [978-0-9989709-1-2](https://www.isbn-international.org/product/9780998970912)

Plumb Bob Press



For more information, visit:

www.PlumbBobPress.com or www.AsktheBuilder.com Plumb Bob Page

Table of Contents

Prologue

Chapter One - What is Sewer Gas?

Chapter Two - Most Common Sources of Sewer Gas

Chapter Three - How to Find Your Sewer Gas Leak

Chapter Four - How to STOP Sewer Gas Leaks



Prologue

Sewer gas stinks bad, really bad. I've been a master plumber since age 29 and I can help you locate and **STOP** the odor in less than one hour in most cases.

I know you're suffering and the good news is you and I together are going to solve your sewer gas problem. In a few minutes I'm going to ask you a series of questions that will help you locate exactly where the sewer gas is entering your home.

You may be spending the night in a motel the odor is so bad. It could be making you sick. Recently I solved a sewer-gas problem in a home where the wife had become extremely ill and doctors had no idea what was wrong. As soon as I located and stopped the sewer gas from entering the home, she started to feel much better the next day.

Forget calling an expensive plumber for now. In most cases, you can almost always fix the problem yourself with what you're about to discover. A plumber may be required if the cause is a cracked drain or vent-pipe. The good news is cracked pipes are a rare cause of sewer gas. Almost always it's something you can remedy on your own.



Let's go hunting now and find the source of the sewer gas that's bothering you and your loved ones. Don't worry, soon your home is going to be rid of the foul odor and smell like a fresh Spring day!

Tim Carter

P.S. If you don't have the patience to read through this short book and want me to solve your sewer gas problem on the phone or during a video call, I can do that. [CLICK or TAP HERE to set up the phone or video call.](#)



Chapter One - What is Sewer Gas?

Sewer gas is a noxious invisible gas produced by decomposing organic matter. You'll find this gas in all plumbing drainpipes in houses, apartments, or businesses. It can also be found in septic tanks and large-capacity sewer lines that connect houses to the local sewer plant.

Much of the decomposing organic matter comes from your body. Take a whiff of a fresh bowel movement from yourself or someone else in your home and you instantly can understand why sewer gas is so rank.

Food scraps and any other organic matter you allow to enter your home's drain pipes can also produce sewer gas as they decompose.

Mold growing on the inner walls of pipes that feeds on body oil, food, soap, and other things can also create a gas that smells just like sewer gas. This black goo on the pipe walls is often called biofilm.

Sewer gas can drift out of the vent pipes on the roof of your home and be drawn into your home or onto your deck or patio causing discomfort. I'll go into great detail about how to stop sewer gas vent-pipe odor in the next chapter.

The first thing to remember is when no water is flowing into or draining from a plumbing fixture in your home, all of the drain and vent lines behind walls, in floors and up in attic spaces are filled with this foul gas. Sewer gas is always trying to enter your home.

Fresh air is drawn into your plumbing pipes through the roof vent pipe each time you flush a toilet or lots of water flows down a drain line at once.

Many people think this vent pipe up on a roof works like a fireplace chimney. The truth is it's there to bring replacement air back into your drain pipes after you have pushed the air down the drain and sewer lines much like a fast-moving train pushes huge amounts of air ahead of it as the train passes through a tunnel. When flushing a toilet or putting other water into your drain pipes, the fast-moving water pushes air in front of it as it travels to the sewer or your septic tank. This air needs to be replaced and it enters the pipes via the roof vent pipe.

In spite of this periodic injection of a small amount of fresh air, it doesn't take long for the pipes to be filled once more with the repugnant sewer gas.

How Does the Sewer Gas Get Into My Home?

The sewer gas can enter your home in any number of ways. The most common entry point is a trap under a sink, tub, shower, or floor drain that has lost its water seal. Sewer gas can enter via a cracked or unsealed plumbing drain or vent pipe. The gas can also

enter from a failed toilet gasket. Sewer gas can also enter your home from the roof vent pipe via open windows, nearby open skylights, or heating appliance fresh-air intakes.

Those are just a few places where the gas can infiltrate your home. You'll discover other sources in subsequent chapters.

Is Sewer Gas Toxic?

Yes, sewer gas is toxic. It contains all sorts of compounds, not the least of which are hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, carbon dioxide, and methane gas. Short-term exposure can give you headaches, a tired feeling, you might get dizzy, and you might feel as if you have the flu. Exposure to sewer gas for hours might make you forgetful and you discover you have trouble staying on task.

Long-term exposure to higher levels of sewer gas can make you feel exceedingly ill with far greater symptoms. It's not uncommon for young doctors to fail to realize your illness is directly related to sewer gas exposure.

If you're feeling ill and think the cause is sewer gas, exit your home and simply start exposing yourself to lots of fresh air. If sewer gas is the issue, you'll start to feel better in a very short time.

Is Sewer Gas Explosive and Does It Require a Fire Department Response?

Yes, sewer gas in higher concentrations can be explosive. It's always a good idea to call your local fire department and have them check. The odor you smell could be some other explosive gas. Don't take a chance. Call 911 if you're frightened.

Other Sources of Foul Odors

It's possible the gas odor that's bothering you is not sewer gas. It could be a:

- small natural gas or propane leak
- decomposing dead animal
- mold or mildew
- biofilm and mold in air-conditioning condensate drain pans and drain lines

To rule out natural or propane gas leaks, always call 911 first from a safe location, then reach out immediately to your local natural gas or propane provider. Request they come out and check for a gas leak.

It's not uncommon for a natural gas main out in a street to develop a leak. The gas can travel back towards your home along the contact point between the pipe that feeds your home and the soil surrounding the pipe.

In dry conditions, the clay soil around the gas lines shrinks and provides a pathway for the gas to travel hundreds of feet finally coming into your home via a crack in your foundation or through an open window above or near your gas meter.



Chapter Two - What Stops Sewer Gas?

Plumbers discovered well over one hundred years ago that water is the easiest way to stop sewer gas from entering a living space.

Look under your kitchen or bathroom sinks and you'll discover a u-shaped pipe that connects to a horizontal pipe that disappears into a wall. This simple u-shaped pipe is a trap that contains water. Plumbers call these p-traps because they resemble the letter P laying on its side.

The trap serves a second purpose. If you happen to drop a small heavier-than-water valuable item in the sink and it makes it to the trap, you can often retrieve the item so long as you stop water from entering the sink the instant you drop it into the sink.



Look into your toilet bowl and you'll see one-half of the u-shaped pipe holding the water that stops sewer gas from coming through the toilet bowl. The other half of the toilet trap is hidden from view by the china bowl.



The water in p-traps can and does evaporate. If the water level drops below the top arch of the “u”, then gas can start to drift up into your home.

You should pour water into every fixture or floor drain in your home at least every two weeks to ensure they're filled to the maximum level.

The water in p-traps can also be suctioned out of the trap by rapidly draining water from a nearby fixture. This can happen if a fixture vent pipe becomes blocked and/or the vent pipes in the plumbing system were not designed and installed correctly. It can also happen if a do-it-yourselfer or other inexperienced person installed plumbing drain lines without vent pipes.

You might hear this suction or gurgling noise when you flush a toilet in a bathroom. Seconds after flushing, you may hear this slurping, gurgling, or suction sound from your tub or shower drain or the vanity drain.

You would do well to [watch a video I created a few years back showing you how plumbing vent pipes should be installed](#).

Hidden P-Traps

It's important to realize there are hidden p-traps in your home you can't readily see. You'll discover them under:

- floor drains
- washing machine standpipes / drain boxes / drain pans
- shower drains
- bathtub drains
- some drain pans under washing machines and water heaters

This means you need to pour water into these traps every two weeks to ensure they don't dry out.

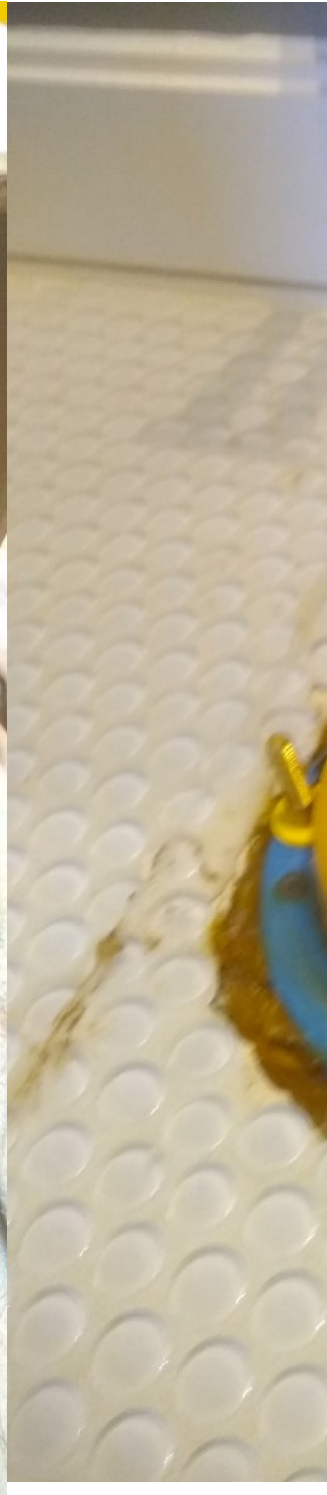
Toilets Require an Extra Seal

The p-trap in a toilet is technically an s-trap and it's fully within the bowl of the toilet that sits above the floor. A point often overlooked by the average homeowner is the mysterious connection between the toilet and the plumbing drainpipe.

This connection must be both waterproof and gas-proof. Round wax gaskets that resemble a doughnut have been used successfully for decades to create this seal that stops sewer gas. There are other toilet gaskets that can be used that don't employ wax. I'm not a big fan of the newer toilet gaskets. Wax is dense, is time-tested, and when installed correctly, it will never allow sewer gas or wastewater to enter your home.

The following two photos show wax gaskets. The first photo shows the gasket applied to the bottom of the toilet before it's set onto the toilet flange.

The second photo shows how you can install the wax gasket on the blue metal toilet flange and then slowly lower the toilet bowl onto the gasket to create a gas and waterproof seal.



Please [watch this video to discover more about how toilets are designed](#) and to see parts of a toilet you've never thought of before.

Please [read this past column of mine to discover how toilets are supposed to be connected to the plumbing drain system.](#)

How Your Plumbing Drain and Vent Pipes Work

It's very important to realize how your plumbing drain and vent pipes work. You may feel it's complex and beyond your ability to comprehend. Believe it or not, it's actually very easy to understand.

The plumbing drain and vent pipes in your home are much like the blood vessels in your body. When all is well, the blood stays in your veins, blood vessels, and arteries. If you cut yourself, blood begins to leak out of the enclosed blood vessels. Think of sewer gas as the blood in your body.

The exact same thing happens with your plumbing drain and vent lines. When all is well, the sewage and sewer gas stay within the pipes. If there's a crack in a pipe, a trap loses its water seal, or perhaps a toilet gasket fails, water or sewer gas can leak out.

The drain lines where water and waste flow out of your home towards the sewer or septic tank are rarely the source of the sewer gas leak. Drain pipes that are above a concrete slab or inside a house will alert you if there's a leak. Water will leak out causing a stain in a wall, ceiling, or on the floor. The leak location may be a cracked pipe, a loose nut on a p-trap under a sink, tub, or shower, or a fitting connecting two pieces of pipe. If this leak location is the source of the sewer-gas problem, the odor will stop immediately once you repair the cracked or leaking drainpipe.

*Now that you know how everything works, let's go discover where the sewer gas is entering your home. [Go HERE to get the final two chapters of my Sewer Gas Smell ebook.](#) You'll soon discover HOW to locate the source of the foul odor and more importantly, **HOW TO STOP it!***

*Use the following PROMO CODE to get a 50% discount: **GAS***



You're going to SAVE HUNDREDS of dollars
when you [read the final two chapters](#).

You'll discover HOW to locate the source of
your sewer or septic gas problem.

Thanks!

Tim Carter

Master Plumber - Founder of
AsktheBuilder.com