



Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District
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[THIS NOTICE IS IN LEIU OF A JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER]

As most are aware, a major portion of our sewer project involves a process of lining the sewer pipes called Cured-in-Place Pipe (CIPP). Part of the process involves the use of resin, which has a styrene component in it. Styrene is found naturally in some foods, beverages and plants, but is commonly used to make plastics. Thus it is present in many household products, even food containers. Since the styrene has a noticeable odor, there have been some inquiries about the concentrations in the air here at the Pointe. Calls were made to the WA State Department of Health (DOH), who then contacted the Department of Ecology (ECY) to assist, as they have more sophisticated testing equipment.

The ECY team of environmental specialists respond to spills, air quality concerns, etc. They visited here on Dec. 18, and checked 3 different locations—2 where work was being performed at the time and 1 where work was done the day before. They used a meter to test the air around sewer piping and below are their findings. For comparison, OSHA sets limits for worker-exposure to 100 parts per million (ppm), while ECY sets a limit of 20 ppm.

Site #1 - CIPP work had just been completed on a lateral line between a home and a sewer manhole. At the manhole, there was nothing detected, while at a clean-out next to the house, the level was 5 ppm.

Site #2 - The CIPP was being prepared for installation in the work trailer. Inside the trailer, where the odor was quite noticeable, the level was 1 ppm.

Site #3 - CIPP work had been done the previous day, finishing around 6:00 pm. At the sewer clean-out outside the home, the styrene level was 2-3 ppm. The occupants of the home allowed ECY to test inside the residence and no styrene was detected. The occupants reported that they never noticed any odors.

ECY informed us that while the levels were low and thus considered safe, the styrene does have a powerful scent and is able to be detected by the human nose at 1 ppm. We inquired about small pets and were told that anything with a smaller respiratory system will be affected more quickly. They advised us to remind all residents to flush toilets and run all faucets to ensure p-traps are full of water to minimize the chance of any gases entering homes, whether it's styrene or common sewer gases. Consider temporarily relocating infants or pets to a closed room without drains while you ventilate other areas should you discover dry toilets/drain traps that have allowed passage of styrene fumes. We've previously suggested that residents consider spending the day away from home, as well.

The Iron Horse crew will knock at your residence and place door hangers prior to work on lines that serve your home; a District contact # is provided should questions arise.