

## Styrene and the “Plastic” Smell

You may notice an odor like that of new plastic during the pipe repair process. This odor may be caused by a chemical named styrene that is used to make many types of plastics and resins, including many household products.

## How is styrene used in the sewer repair process?

Insituform rehabilitates deteriorated sewers by installing a resin-saturated felt tube that later hardens into a strong “pipe-within-a-pipe.” Styrene is used in the resin that makes up the outside of the new pipe.

## Will I smell styrene odors when Insituform is rehabilitating nearby sewers?

Styrene can be detected by its smell even when there are very small amounts of the chemical present. As a result, persons living along the sewer lines may notice styrene’s distinct plastic smell during the new cured-in-place pipe process.

## What should I do if I smell styrene?

If you detect the smell indoors, make sure that your home or business is properly ventilated. If you cannot open your windows and doors, or otherwise increase the airflow inside, go outside until the smell dissipates. In addition, you can significantly curtail the chance that odors will make their way into your home or business by making sure that your sewer connections are in proper working order and that the sewer traps have water in them, especially all floor and laundry drains. This is because styrene odors may enter a structure in the same way as methane (sewer gas) would. If you detect the smell outdoors, avoiding areas like manholes, storm drains, and other openings during the rehabilitation process will reduce your contact with styrene odors.

## Do the styrene odors released during the sewer rehabilitation process pose a risk to my health?

The release of styrene during the typical sewer rehabilitation process does not pose a significant risk to human health or the surrounding environment. Many people, even if able to detect the styrene odor, have no reaction or symptoms. Some people are more sensitive to these odors. Common symptoms of exposure to the levels of styrene typically produced by the sewer rehabilitation process include headache, nausea, dizziness, and lightheadedness. These symptoms will likely go away after the exposure ends and the person is allowed to get some fresh air. If you experience a feeling of headache, nausea, dizziness, or lightheadedness, seek fresh air immediately. If these symptoms persist, seek medical attention.