



## TIP OF THE MONTH



### SEWER GAS

#### What's that smell coming from the drain?

Odors coming from sinks or washtubs are usually caused by plumbing drain traps or “P Traps” that are empty or drying out. The P Trap is a U-shaped pipe under the sink which holds a reservoir of water after the sink has drained. The water acts as a seal against sewer gas backing up through the pipe and the gas being released into the room. Odor problems are most often found in sinks that are rarely used.

In commercial buildings AET's IAQ Investigators find these occurrences in rooms which the use has changed (such as from a laboratory to a storage room). In schools, similar occurrences are prevalent in Nurses' rooms, laboratories, kitchens and restrooms over the extended summer break.

Recommended Solutions to eliminate odors emanating from drains include:

1. Remove unwanted sinks, tubs, etc. during renovations (maintain vent lines as needed by code)
2. Periodically (at least twice per month) run water into infrequently used sinks to refill the trap with water. Note: If the water from the tap is discolored, this is an indication that you may have a sewer gas problem.
3. Clean sludge buildup from drains with a brush on an annual basis. Chemicals such as bleach may only remove surface bacteria allowing new growth to buildup. Harsh chemical cleaners can shorten the life of plumbing system components.
4. Check roof vents from plumbing systems for blockage or restrictions.

**About our organization:** AET has over 28 years of environmental contracting/consulting experience including hundreds of odor investigation projects. AET has a proven record of success to respond promptly and cost effectively to these issues.

**FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO AN ODOR COMPLAINT** email Roy Mosaicant at [r.mosaicant@aetinc.biz](mailto:r.mosaicant@aetinc.biz) or Call AET at 610-891-0114 or 1-800-9696-AET. We provide nationwide services; phone consultations are free. Check out the full range of lead consulting and contracting services AET provides at our website at [www.aetinc.biz](http://www.aetinc.biz)