



**September  
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**Accredited Environmental Technologies, Inc.**

**1-800-969-6AET**

**[www.aetinc.biz](http://www.aetinc.biz)**

## **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 in the room.

Odor problems are most often found in sinks that are rarely used, as the water in the P Trap has evaporated to a point allowing sewer gas to pass. In commercial buildings AET's IAQ investigators find these occurrences in rooms which 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 Solution in minimizing trap draining:

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. If the water is discolored, this is an indication that you may have a problem (a.k.a backup).
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. Also harsh chemical cleaners can shorten the life of plumbing system components.
4. Check roof vents from plumbing systems for blockage or restrictions.

**FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO AN ODOR  
COMPLAINT**

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