

September 20, 2013

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The City of Burleson has issued an emergency suspension order to AA China Super Buffet for violations of the City's industrial waste ordinance due to high levels of hydrogen sulfide gas.

The restaurant, located at 1045 S.W. Wilshire Blvd., was ordered to cease all discharges into the City's sanitary sewer system before 12:01 a.m. today, Sept. 20; completely (100 percent) pump out all grease interceptors by 10 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 23; obtain the services of a registered professional engineer specializing in wastewater treatment for the purpose of designing a pretreatment system which will bring AA China Super Buffet into compliance with City ordinances; and implement corrective measures so that wastewater discharge from AA China Super Buffet complies with City ordinances before restarting the wastewater discharge to the City's sanitary sewer system.

The City's action is based on results of air quality testing inside sanitary sewer manholes and a sewer vent pipe downstream of AA China Super Buffet. This testing, conducted over a five-week period by Alan Plummer Associates, Inc. (APAI), environmental engineers and scientists based in Fort Worth, detected hydrogen sulfide gas levels in excess of levels permitted by ordinance.

Hydrogen sulfide gas, commonly referred to as sewer gas, is a colorless, flammable, extremely hazardous gas with a rotten egg smell. Hydrogen sulfide occurs naturally in crude petroleum, natural gas, and hot springs. In addition, hydrogen sulfide is produced by bacterial breakdown of organic materials and human and animal wastes (e.g., sewage). Hydrogen sulfide is heavier than air and dissipates in the environment. It is typically in greatest concentrations in enclosed or confined spaces such as manholes.

The City currently has no evidence that patrons of the restaurant were exposed to the sewer gas since it was vented externally through the public sewer system.

While this particular issue has been alleviated, this should serve as a reminder to all residents of the importance of plumbing maintenance. City building code requires all drain pipes to include a sewer gas barrier called a P trap. The sole purpose of a P trap is to isolate the interior of occupiable spaces from the sanitary drainage and vent system. A trap "traps" liquid waste and retains it to

form a seal or barrier through which gases and vapors in the drainage and vent system cannot pass under normal operating conditions.

If your home's internal plumbing is working correctly, you should never smell sewer gas within your home. If you do smell sewer gas within your home, you should open doors and/or windows to ventilate the home to alleviate the odor and any potential health threat. To ensure P traps are working correctly, run at least 1 gallon of water through every drain in your home, i.e. sinks, tubs, etc. If the odor persists after flowing water into P traps, you should call a plumber to evaluate your home's internal plumbing to find the problem.

For more information regarding this issue contact Kevin North, assistant public works director at 817-426-9830 or email knorth@burlesontx.com.