



Sewer Smell in HVAC or Laundry Closet

Occasionally you may notice a stinky sewer smell in your HVAC or laundry closet.

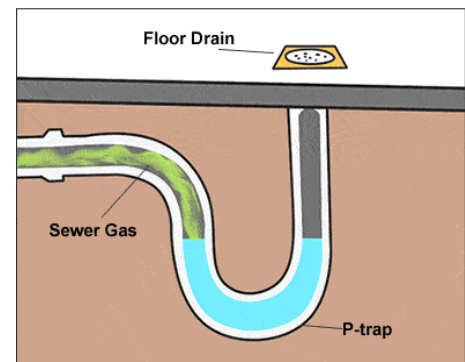
The most likely cause is that the p-trap in the closet floor drain has dried out, allowing the smell from the sewer side of the drain pipe to waft up into the closet.

Your washer/dryer and HVAC units may be in the same or different closets depending on your unit type. However, each has a floor drain in place to drain the condensate produced during heating and cooling by your HVAC system (and to act as a catchall for any big leaks).

What's Happening?

Like drain pipes that you are familiar with (such as kitchen or bathroom sinks), the P-trap in the closet floor drain has a u-shaped bend which holds a small amount of water in the curve -- effectively blocking the sewer air from coming up the drain into your apartment.

However, in the spring and fall seasons, when your HVAC system doesn't run very much (or at all), it doesn't produce enough condensation to keep the P-trap full, so the trap can dry out.



The Fix

The fix is easy: simply pour about a quart of water directly down the drain to refill the bend in the drain's P-trap. That's it.

Optionally, there are some products that can create a "Vapor Lock" by way of a pleasant smelling oil that floats on top of the water in the drain and prevents evaporation.