



News to Protect What Matters Most

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Common Answers To Uncommon Problems

By Ryan Quinn, Firefighter/Paramedic

The Edina Fire Department responds to more than 900 fire-related calls every year.

While some are false alarms, there are still situations that, if not handled correctly, can be very dangerous. Those calls range from the smell of gas in a house and cut gas lines to arcing and downed power lines. Do you know how to properly handle those situations?

What do I do if I smell gas in my house?

The safest thing to do is leave the house quickly, leaving the door open so fire crews can get inside. Do not turn on or off any appliances or lights or use the garage door.

Call 9-1-1 from outside your house or from a neighbor's house.

The Fire Department will arrive with air monitors and safety equipment. Firefighters will work with the gas company to pinpoint the problem. It could be anything from a gas stove that was not turned off to a broken gas line in the basement. The Fire Department and gas company will find the problem and determine when you can return to your home.

What if I accidentally cut a gas line in my yard?

Before doing any digging in your yard, call

8-1-1 two or three weekdays in advance of your project. Even if your project is as small as planting a tree, it is important to have all utility lines marked. It would be no fun to be without gas, electricity or even cable and internet. In addition, the cost of repairs and any associated fines may be assessed to the property owner.

Whether you plan some do-it-yourself Saturday yard work or you hire a contractor, it is still important to have utility lines marked. We have even seen situations where someone has pulled out a dead shrub or dug a small hole for flowers and the shovel damaged a gas line. Indicators of

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A Word From The Chief

By Edina Fire Chief Marty Scheerer

The Edina Fire Department is one of the leaders in training with neighboring fire departments. Several years ago, the Edina Fire Department formed a joint operations group with two neighboring fire departments,

Richfield and St. Louis Park. Joint training and mutual aid responses proved to be an enormous benefit for all the cities involved. Soon, other fire departments joined and we now have a large

joint operations work group consisting of approximately 12 departments. The group strives to coordinate and standardize training, response times, safety, operations and communication.

The benefits of the joint training with our neighbors are numerous. The initial training a firefighter receives is done with firefighters from other cities. This lowers training cost, provides consistent training to all firefighters in the area and builds lifelong relationships among those who will work together on emergency scenes. When firefighters finish training, they know and trust other community firefighters – a key training element. Firefighters must be able to trust that the other responding firefighters will “have their backs” if something goes wrong.



Marty Scheerer
Edina Fire Chief

The South Metro Public Safety Training Facility, 7525 Braemar Blvd., was founded by Bloomington, Eden Prairie and Edina Police and Fire departments and the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport Police. The facility is also used by many area and regional organizations for training. It is another great example of our joint training and cost-sharing initiatives.

Today, when there is a fire or another large emergency in Edina or in one of our neighboring cities, fire units from other cities also respond with mutual aid. This larger, coordinated response is safer for the communities, as it helps firefighters improve response time and decreases the cost of the response.

For more information, visit www.EdinaMN.gov/fire.



Fire Marshal's Corner

By Edina Fire Marshal Tom Jensen

Fires in apartments are a completely different animal than fires in single-family homes. Apartment buildings are much larger and put more people at risk. Luckily, in Edina, we have had few apartment fires. However, they are still a possibility.

In the event of a fire in your apartment or multi-family building, it is important to keep these tips in mind to make sure everyone gets out safely:

- If you hear an alarm sounding or smell smoke, go to your door and feel it with back of your hand. If the door is not hot, place your foot against the bottom of the door and open it carefully.
- If the door is hot, unlock the door, but do not open it. Call 9-1-1 immediately to report your unit number. Go to the

furthest window and open it. Wave a sheet or towel to attract attention and wait for Fire Department instructions. Put wet towels or sheets around your door and vents to keep smoke out.

- If the fire is in your unit, leave your apartment, closing the door behind you. Pull the manual fire alarm to notify the other residents there is a fire. As soon as you are safe, call 9-1-1 and report the fire. Pulling a manual fire alarm may not automatically notify the Fire Department. For small fires, fire extinguishers are provided in your unit or in the hallway.
- When evacuating, never use the elevator. Make sure you know the location of the nearest stairs.



Tom Jensen
Edina Fire Marshal

- Meet with your landlord or building manager to learn about evacuation plans and fire safety in your building.

For more information, contact the Edina Fire Department's Fire Prevention Bureau at 952-826-0330.



Problems... *Continued from page 1*

damaged gas lines include a hissing sound of pressurized gas and a little dirt blowing around. An unpleasant, but recognizable smell of mercaptan, the rotten egg-smell gas companies add to natural gas, will also be present.

The first thing you should do is call 9-1-1 from a safe distance. The emergency dispatcher will ask questions to assist the Fire Department while we are responding. It is important to give as much information regarding the incident as possible. The Fire Department will arrive quickly; police will accompany fire units for traffic control and help with evacuations should the need

arise. The Fire Department will confirm that the gas company has been notified. Crews will take into consideration the wind speed and direction and the size of the leaking gas line. They will also monitor air quality in the area. The gas company will usually turn off the gas to allow repair of the gas line.

It is completely appropriate to call 9-1-1 for cut gas lines, the smell of gas or if you believe a situation is unsafe, including those involving propane tanks.

The power lines are arcing in my backyard! What do I do?

This has become more common this year, especially after several bouts of strong storms earlier in the summer. From a safe distance, call 9-1-1 right away to report the incident and tell the emergency dispatcher what you see and what is happening. Do not approach the power line to "get a closer look." Treat all power lines as if they are energized. Downed power lines can sometimes be hard to see, especially if surrounded by trees or other obstacles. Lines could fall on metal fences, energizing the fence.

Do not touch power lines or attempt to de-energize them. Electric company technicians are the only ones who can cut the power and make the area safe. The Fire Department will not pull lines or put out electrical fires on power poles. The best thing to do is keep your family members away. The Fire Department can put up barricade tape and tell people to stay away but, after a storm, crews may not be able to stay on scene and wait for the power company to arrive.

The common theme for the uncommon emergency is to call 9-1-1. We respond to far more calls for assistance without fire than those involving it. Remember, the Fire Department is a resource to help solve problems that put the community at risk. When in doubt, give us a call and we will help you stay safe.

Call before you dig! Call 8-1-1 several days before doing any digging. For more information, visit www.call811.com.

