

**LINE OF DUTY
DEATH REPORT**
VISUAL EXTENSION



F2018-12 WI

One Firefighter Dies and Another Injured
in Natural Gas Line Explosion—
Wisconsin



Summary

On July 10, 2018, a 34-year old paid-on-call/volunteer fire Captain died, and another firefighter was injured in a building explosion while responding to a report of a natural gas leak.





Summary

- Fire department was dispatched for a report of gas odor at an intersection approximately 1 block away from the fire station.
- The initial arriving crew immediately began evacuating the surrounding buildings and the Incident Commander called for additional personnel to respond from the station.
- A Captain and several other firefighters arrived following the staffing request.
- After checking in with the Incident Commander, the Captain, along with firefighters from the initial responding crew, entered a building near the suspected leak to control utilities in the basement. As the crew was exiting, the building exploded.



Contributing Factors

- Sub-contractor performing unpermitted directional boring for underground utility
- Natural gas leak caused by directional boring
- Natural gas line explosion
- Responders working in blast radius at time of explosion
- Captain and crew entered building previously evacuated during primary search to attempt to control utilities



Key Recommendation

Fire departments should refer to the 2020 Emergency Response Guidebook and operate outside of the **hot zone** once civilians are evacuated.





Key Recommendation

Fire departments should ensure that Incident Commanders continuously evaluate the **risk versus gain** when making operational decisions during evacuation operations.





Key Recommendation

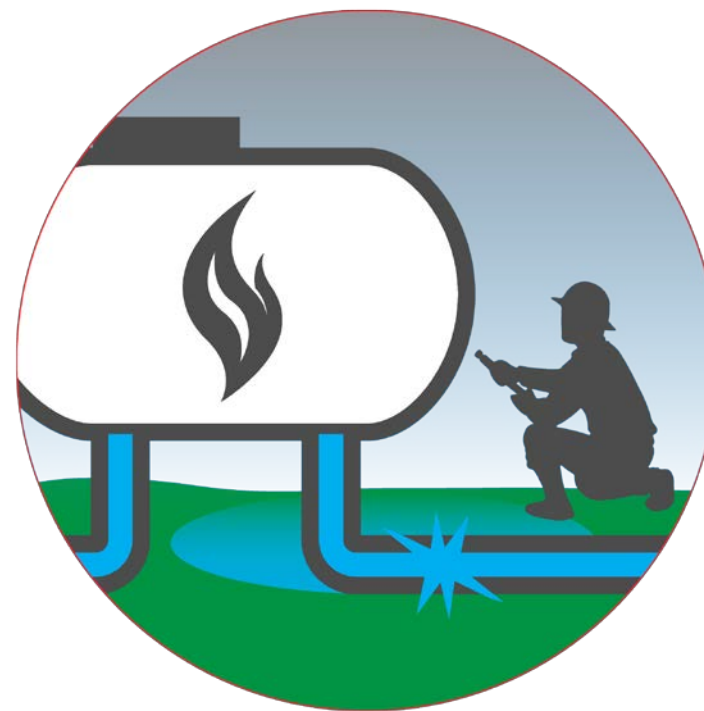
Fire departments should ensure that firefighters are trained in **situational awareness, personal safety, and accountability.**





Key Recommendation

Fire Departments should ensure that their members (and specifically their hazardous materials teams) are provided and trained in the latest tactics and equipment for **detecting and responding to hazardous materials** situations, including gas leaks.





Key Recommendation

Governing municipalities (federal, state, regional, and local) should **work with civilians to educate them on the hazards of gas leaks** and the need to immediately evacuate when public safety workers (fire and police) direct them to do so.





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