



City of Madison Fire Department

News Release

Date: July 17, 2009

Released By: Lori Wirth – Public Information Officer
(608) 266-5947 or (608) 575-4943

Beer Truck Rollover Slows Traffic for Hours



City of Madison Firefighters were called to the scene of an overturned semi-trailer on Highway 151 North this morning at 7:30.

When Engine Company 11 arrived, they found the entire rig on its side, blocking three lanes of the northbound traffic, and a heavy odor of beer throughout the area.

The semi was carrying a full load of beer, which poured out the rear doors of the trailer. Diesel fuel was also leaking from the cab. The fuel leak was plugged quickly and firefighters put oil absorbents on the road to soak up the diesel fuel. Absorbents were also used to create a dam to prevent the beer from entering the drainage system.

The driver of the semi was unhurt and declined medical attention at the scene.

Tow trucks arrived and dragged the semi-trailer to the side of the road to allow one additional lane of traffic to open, but clearing the scene entirely took more than three hours.

The heavy load of broken beer bottles presented significant challenges to righting the trailer. Representatives from Prairieland Towing estimated the weight of the cargo at 44,000 pounds, with the full weight of the tractor and trailer together at 83,000 pounds.

The aluminum roof of the trailer was already bulging from the weight of the shifted load when it overturned. Towing operators used heavy strapping to hold the trailer together as they tipped it up. The trailer began to break up during the first attempt. Workers re-positioned the straps and successfully righted the rig on the second attempt. But when they attempted to tow the wreckage from the scene, the trailer split, making it necessary to offload the cargo before clearing the scene.

Firefighters remained on the scene until the truck was righted. A hose was kept ready in the event that sparks from the metal truck being dragged across the concrete roadway ignited any leaking fuel.



--END--