



City of Madison Fire Department

News Release

Date: September 11, 2009

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Firefighters Respond to Small Chemical Spill

The City of Madison Fire Department's Hazardous Incident Team (HIT) responded to a small chemical spill this afternoon at the Wingra Family Medical Center. The spill was reported at 1:46 PM and caused an evacuation of the building at 701 Dane Street.

The chemical involved was identified as phenol, a flammable and toxic chemical that presents an inhalation hazard. An employee was removing the bottle of phenol from a shipping box when approximately three ounces spilled. It appeared that the bottle's lid was loose.

Some of the phenol was spilled on the employee's skin and was flushed with water before emergency crews arrived. The employee was treated by paramedics and transported to the hospital.

Five other people who were in the building when the spill occurred were transported to the hospital during the incident. Two people experienced shortness of breath, two people reported nausea, and one person had some discomfort while breathing. It is unknown if these symptoms were caused by the spilled chemical.

HIT personnel identified the chemical and its hazards before entering the building for air quality monitoring. Personnel from the UW Safety Department cleaned up the spill once the Hazardous Incident Team deemed it was safe to enter the building without protective equipment. The spilled material was contained to the building and did not present a hazard to anyone outside the building. Fire department personnel remained on scene until 3:56 PM.

Madison's Hazardous Incident Team (HIT) is one of eight regional "Level A" hazardous materials response teams designated by the State of Wisconsin to provide assistance in hazardous materials emergencies. The team can be activated for any incident involving a hazardous materials release, leak, explosion, injury, or potential of immediate threat to life, the environment, or property.

The team is comprised of eighteen core team members with specialized hazardous materials operations training. In addition, there are over 54 department members or satellite personnel located throughout the twelve fire stations that have hazardous materials training and are ready for calls in the event of a hazardous materials incident.

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