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Updated: 02/01/2010 11:28 PM KSTP.com | [Print](#) | [Email](#)
 By: Tim Sherno, Katie Lynn and Becky Nahm



St. Paul house fire evacuates block, 1 injured



A gas leak that sparked a fire that destroyed a home forced the evacuation of an entire block in St. Paul's Highland neighborhood.

St. Paul fire officials said the fire started around 11 a.m. Monday at a home on

Villard Avenue.

According to fire officials, a worker was in the basement of the home, repairing a sewer line, when he hit a gas line.

They said, gas leaked into the home and there was a small explosion.

The worker was able to get the homeowner out of the home, but suffered burns to the side of his face. Ron Moe, the father and co-worker of the victim, said his son is recovering at Regions Hospital with singed hair and a red face.

Fire officials said firefighters were unable to tackle the fire right away because of the leaking gas. They said dousing the fire could have allowed the gas to build up and cause another explosion. While they waited, they worked to stop the fire from spreading to the neighboring homes.

Fire officials and Xcel Energy workers were also worried about gas leaking into the sewer lines which is why they asked neighbors to leave their homes.

After Xcel Energy workers shut off the gas, firefighters were able to put out the flames. The home was a total loss.

A representative from Xcel Energy said new gas lines were installed in the area in the 1990s. The representative said it is possible that one of the newer gas lines was run through a sewer line.

The official cause of the leak is under investigation.

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