



05/07/2009

## 8 Md. firefighters burned in natural gas explosion

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FORESTVILLE, Md. — A total of eight firefighters and one Washington Gas employee were injured in an apparent natural gas explosion at a shopping center in Forestville. Some were seriously burned.

Two of the firefighters are being held overnight for observation, and the other seven have been released. Five were transported to the Washington Hospital Center's burn unit, and four were transported to Prince George's Hospital.

As many as a dozen people were injured. Many were struck by debris from the explosion.

According to Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department spokesperson Mark Brady, the fire department received a call around 12:30 PM for a report of a natural gas leak. They arrived at 3426 Donnell Drive and evacuated the a number of businesses at the Penn Mar Shopping Center. Sometime after that, the explosion occurred.

Brady reports that a flash fire burned the firefighters and gas company worker. The building was heavily damaged.

At last word the building was so heavily damaged firefighters were not able to go in and search to make sure everyone got out. Brady says they are hoping everyone was brought out of the building in the initial evacuation.

Brady says the explosion occurred in a row of five store fronts. One housed a medical facility, another null was a fast food restaurant. At least one of the stores was vacant.

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