Residents allowed home after gas spill

3,500 gallons of fuel mess on the road

Published: Tuesday, 19 Apr 2011, 10:27 AM CDT
Updated: Wednesday, 20 Apr 2011, 11:58 AM CDT
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GEORGETOWN, Texas (KXAN) - A fuel tanker overturned in the Sun City area on Del Webb Boulevard at about 8 a.m. Tuesday and disrupted traffic and neighbors' lives for the entire day. Residents were finally allowed to return home at about 6 p.m.

City of Georgetown officials said late Tuesday the road should be opened to two-way traffic by 7:30 p.m. Traffic between Double Fire Trail and Whispering Wind Drive will be limited to two lanes. Crews worked all day to avoid an explosion and clean up the 3,500 gallons of spilled gasoline.

Because of the crushed truck cab, the truck was left running because crews could not get to the ignition to shut it off, increasing the danger of a spark igniting the gas, according to officials on the scene.

Power was shut off to 200 homes at about 5:30 p.m. for an hour as part of the process.

Officials said cleanup was moving faster than expected.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Residents were evacuated from about 140 homes as a safety measure as soon as the crash happened while Hazardous Material crews from Hutto, Williamson County, Jollyville and Georgetown worked to clean up the mess.

Efforts throughout the day were made to prevent any sparks causing a static charge and triggering an explosion. Fire crews monitored vapors in the area to determine if there was danger of explosion. Because of severe damage to the cab of the truck, officials could not shut off its engine, a safety measure as soon as the crash happened while Hazardous Material crews from Hutto, Williamson County, Jollyville and Georgetown worked to clean up the mess.

The American Red Cross set up a temporary shelter at the Sun City ballroom at 2 Texas Drive. Nine people took advantage of the shelter, and no injuries to residents were reported as a result of the spill.

Traffic was rerouted and Del Webb Boulevard closed until cleanup is completed Tuesday night.

Officials and an emergency crew from Texas Commission on Environmental Quality were at the crash scene all day.
assessing the environmental impact of the spill.

"If this was on fire this would be a much easier situation to handle because we let the fuel burn. We pack up our stuff when it's done and we clean up. But not being on fire and being in those explosive limits makes this such a more volatile situation," said Fite.

"This kind of thing is happening is kind of scary. But I think the roads here aren't banked the right way when you go into a curve. They're banked to the outside. So somebody who doesn't know it like a truck driver -- like this one -- might have been paying attention the load shifts and boom, over he goes," said Sun City resident Mark Atkinson.

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