

# No injuries in acid spill

BY CAREY HANS  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills firefighters and the department's Special Emergency Response Team donned protective gear and required special equipment to handle an acid spill Tuesday morning at O.E. Dunckel Middle School, 32800 12 Mile.

No one was injured in the spill which occurred inside a storage cabinet in a science room.

Four Farmington Public Schools district maintenance employees were doing traditional, heavy summer cleaning in which cabinets and other items are moved, when the incident occurred at about 8:45 a.m.

No students were in the building at the time, as the district is in summer recess.

According to Farmington Hills Deputy Fire Chief Peter Baldwin, the accident occurred in a cabinet where science chemicals were stored. Acid stored in the cabinet had eaten through the lid of a bottle in which it was stored. When the

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cabinet was moved, it tipped over and spilled, causing a vapor cloud and fumes.

School officials called in the Farmington Hills Fire Department. Firefighters arrived at the scene to encapsulate the acid, monitor the vital signs of employees and firefighters and to check for medical problems. Special equipment was used to pull the vapors out of the air.

No one was taken to the hospital. They called in fire officials "because we didn't know what kind of a chemical we were dealing with," said Pat Fletcher, maintenance and operations supervisor for the schools.

Baldwin said chemical spills are costing fire departments like the Hills thousands of dollars, because of new clean-up regulations for toxic materials. He estimated Tuesday's incident could cost as much as \$2,000 due to materials necessary to protect people and the environment. The unit used to encapsulate the acid fumes could cost upwards of \$400-600 to refill.

"We have to handle these things a lot differently than we did 10 years ago," he said. "It's getting more complicated."

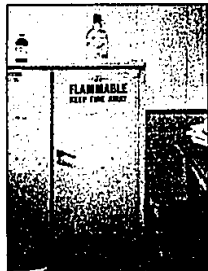
He said fire officials and those from the school district will likely meet in the future to discuss Tuesday's incident, how chemicals are stored in the schools and the possibility of the district disposing of some of the chemicals at the end of the school year.



Cheeking things: Pat Fletcher (left), superintendent of maintenance operations, talks with firefighter Scott Legas as he gets vital statistics of custodian Denise Mason. Mason, who was outside the science room when the chemical spill took place, was uninjured.

STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LAUREL

Air checks: Hills firefighter Bill Mulrooney (front) and inspector Paul Cusack check the air for toxins.



Danger signs: Custodians were cleaning Room 104 at Dunckel Middle School when they bumped a cabinet marked "FLAMMABLE — KEEP FIRE AWAY."

# Farmington officials to review city policy on satellite dishes

BY CAREY HANS  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington officials will consider rules regulating satellite dishes in the city, in light of a complaint received from an Alta Loma resident Monday night.

William Edwards appeared before the city council to complain about a dish installed at a neighbor's house, which he said was unsightly.

"I personally feel it's an eyesore," Edwards said of the dish which was installed in the spring. "And once they start, they tend to proliferate."

The Planning Commission will be directed to look into what other municipalities are doing, study the matter and make any necessary recommendations to city council for rules regulating satellite dish installation or use.

The target of Edwards' complaint is a satellite dish on the nearby home of John Stenson. When contacted by the Observer Tuesday, Stenson said it was the first time he was aware someone had complained. "I haven't heard anything against it at all," he said.

The dish is installed on a ground foundation in the back yard, Stenson said. It is high enough off the ground that several feet of it show over the roofline from the front of the house.

Edwards, who showed the city council a slide of the Stenson house and dish Monday night, had contended his neighbor put the dish on the roof. "He's put it on his roof — he doesn't have to look at it, but all his neighbors do," Edwards said.

Stenson said he would not want to see anyone put a dish on the roof because it would be unsightly and because of structural concerns for the roof.

"I would never put up anything that would be offensive," added the 63-year-old who has lived in the home for more than 30 years and is a past president of the Alta Loma Homeowners Association.

Stenson said he agreed that satellite dishes should remain behind homes, and explained that the company installing the dishes uses instrumentation to determine where they are placed depending on obstacles such as trees.

Edwards told the council he simply wanted something done about the situation before it became a problem throughout the city.

There are currently three satellite dishes in the city, with some installed for "a little some time," according to City Manager Robert Deadman. Deadman said he knows of no municipality which has an outright ban on satellite dishes.

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## POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

### SEWER SEARCH

Four Farmington-area boys were wet, but unhurt, after a stroll through a storm sewer Sunday evening.

Firefighters and police, however, weren't happy with their trip, which resulted in a costly search.

The four, who are either pre-teens or in their early teens, lifted the lid and entered the sewer in the parking lot of the Kroger store at 11 Mile and Middlebelt, Farmington Hills. A store employee saw them go down and called police. Firefighters and police searched for the boys, who apparently emerged somewhere else along the line.

"We had a report on kids missing," said Peter Baldwin, deputy fire chief in Farmington Hills. "We had to search."

### NOISY GAS LEAK

There was plenty of noise — but

no fire or explosion — as a four-inch natural gas line was ruptured Monday evening at a construction site on 12 Mile Road between Halsted and Haggerty roads in Farmington Hills.

The noise, described as "deafening" by a fire official on the scene, was made by gas escaping the broken line. About 20 people were evacuated briefly from nearby office buildings and businesses, the official added.

"We had reports of gas being smelled as far away as Grand River and Halsted," he said.

No injuries were reported.

### FOOD SPOILED

Frozen food, including carrots and tortillas, were reported spoiled after a freezer at Farmington High School, 32000 Shawassee, was broken into and damaged recently. The school reported that \$700 in damage was done to the freezer and in spoiled food due to the incident, which was reported on July 16 after someone went into the school kitchen to work on the plumbing.

### THEFTS REPORTED

Two rifles — \$450 semi-automatic and a \$250 lever-action — were stolen July 16 from a house on Cordoba.

An estimated \$700 in tools were reported stolen from a van parked near Winkelman's, 37049 Grand River during the past week.

An AM/FM disc player valued at \$420 was reported stolen from a car parked at the Big Boy, 20788 Farmington Road over the weekend. A total of \$150 in damage was done to the car when the thieves gained entry.

Radios valued at \$1,114 were reported stolen from a pickup and car on Gill, July 17-20.

A CD player, discs, sunglasses, tennis racket and wallet valued at \$810 were reported stolen from a 1990 Ford on Baywood, July 20.

A 1992 Ford valued at \$15,000 was reported stolen from a house on Tuck, July 20.

A 1989 Chevrolet valued at \$8,000 was reported stolen from Holiday Chevrolet, 30250 Grand River, July 17-18.

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