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## PUBLIC SAFETY NOTICE

On February 1, 2010, a sewer contractor attempted to clear a clog in a sewer line with a cutting tool at a home in St. Paul. The contractor cut the natural gas line. As a result, gas was released into the sewer and into the home. The gas ignited, injuring the contractor and causing a fire that destroyed the home.

Most problems with sewer lines are caused by tree roots or broken pipes, but there is a possibility a utility line could intersect some sewer lines. This problem may exist for several years before it is discovered or an accident occurs.

Trenchless technology is used in some areas to install gas lines in established neighborhoods. This method is chosen to prevent damage to landscaping, sidewalks and streets. During this process, gas lines have been found to have been inadvertently installed in some sewer lines.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) wants all Minnesotans to be aware of this potential problem. Officials with the DPS also urge Minnesotans who may have clogged sewer issues to call the natural gas operator and ask if service has been moved since the home was constructed. If it has not been moved, there is little risk of a gas line breaching the sewer.

- What you can do:
  - Call before you dig: 811 – have your utilities marked to know where they are
  - If you smell gas, leave the house and call 911
  - Ask your sewer operator for a map of your sewer service lateral
  - Keep notes and maps of any locations where gas pipelines cross your sewer service lateral
  - Call your natural gas provider to find out if your gas pipelines have been moved
  - Talk to your plumber about any gas pipeline crossings if have a clog in your sewer
  - Have plumber call pipeline operator if gas pipeline conflict suspected
- Conflicts can only happen if trenchless technology is used and a gas pipeline crosses a sewer
  - Conflicts are more likely if gas pipelines are moved
  - Occur when sewers are shallow and/or gas pipelines are deep
- Conflicts are NOT a problem if:
  - Gas pipeline installed properly (verified no sewer conflict during installation)
  - Gas pipeline was installed by open trench
  - Gas pipeline installed before/concurrently with sewer (open trench new construction)