

## **FIRE DESTROYS HDPE STORM DRAIN IN SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA**

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On Sunday afternoon, December 1, 1991, in Sacramento, California, the Florin Fire Protection District units E-51 and E-53 responded to a fire in a 36" x 400± foot long storm drain adjacent to the Holiday Mobile Village at 7628 Stockton Blvd.

The storm drain had been installed in the late 1980's using ADS N-12 polyethylene pipe.

The trailer park manager reported that the black smoke had been coming from the storm drain for about 10 hours prior to the firemen arriving at the scene. He tried to extinguish the fire with water from a garden hose, but was not successful. Transients were suspected to have built a fire in the culvert to keep warm.

The firemen decided to let the fire continue to burn through the night and then re-evaluate the situation the next morning. Monday morning, the Fire Department personnel flooded the pipe to extinguish the fire. The Sacramento County Maintenance official that inspected the damaged storm drain reported the backfill material had caved in, causing a depression at the surface.

Several days later, the pipe was uncovered and the remnants of what was left of the pipe removed, then replaced with reinforced concrete pipe.

The following comments are from the official records of the Florin Fire Protection District:

Battalion B responded to a fire in a drainage pipe behind Holiday Mobile Home Park, 7628 Stockton Blvd. Upon my arrival, Engine 51 and Engine 53 were on the scene. Capt. Short advised me that there was a fire in the drainage pipe, but that the exact location of the fire was undetermined and we did not know what was burning. The drainage pipe was approximately 400 feet long from one end to the other end. Both ends of the pipe was checked and it was determined the best access was through the manhole where the smoke was coming from. After our personnel entered the pipe and could not reach the seat of the fire, their air supply and safety being concerned, we removed them from the pipe. I requested

assistance from the County of Sacramento, Division of Highways, with information regarding the drainage line. Chris Hobbs, #170 of the Division of Highways Maintenance Department arrived. I also spoke with Capt. Wagstaff of the Sacramento Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Team at Engine 6. D/C Sornsen also arrived and was advised of the status. The residents of the Mobile Home Park reported seeing children and transients entering the pipe from the canal end several times in the past. Due to the darkness, the safety of our personnel and the unknown factors, we decided to let it burn until the next morning. We returned at 0815 hours along with Chris Hobbs to evaluate the status of the fire. It was determined that the fire was the plastic pipe burning, and that we would flood the pipe to extinguish the fire. Mr. Hobbs stated he would return to his office and report to the proper authorities that the pipe is unsafe and needs to be repaired.

D. Norton

REPORT FOR: E-51: (33-03)

Response for a sewer fire. Upon our arrival we found smoke coming from a manhole on the West side of the park. The manager of the park stated that smoke had started coming out about 10 hours prior. They had tried to extinguish it with a garden hose with no success. We called for E53 to assist us and stood by until they arrived. Upon their arrival, we discussed the situation and agreed to send two men into the hole to investigate. F/F McGrew and F/F Von Chance-Stutler entered the storm drain in full SCBA and were able to advance into a 36" pipe about 40'. They were unable to reach the seat of the fire due to low air in the bottles. They removed themselves while we re-evaluated the situation with B/C Norton. After consulting with a representative from the street division and Chief Sornsen, we decided to let the fire burn until the next day, when we could find out more about the situation. All equipment was returned to the apparatus and both units returned 10-8.

M. Short