
CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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FIRE DEPARTMENT PUTS HOSES TO THE PRESSURE TEST

Testing of hose sections undertaken annually to ensure integrity when fighting fires

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The Muscatine Fire Department spent the better part of Wednesday (July 29) testing several hose sections in the department’s inventory for damage, part of a several month process to ensure the integrity of the hose sections.



“We do this annually to make sure that none of the hoses are damaged,” Battalion

Chief Gary Ronzheimer, said. “Often they end up with small holes or even tears in the inner liner due to use. If we did not test them on an annual basis we would not find out about the damage until were at a fire, and that would not be good for anyone.”

Ronzheimer said that a lot of pressure is put on the hoses to pump large amounts of water into a fire.

“We do not want a damaged hose tearing or bursting at a fire,” Ronzheimer said. “That would put our crews in danger and increase fire damage to homes or businesses.”

Each hose section is laid out in the alley behind the Public Safety Building in Muscatine and then pressurized with water. Firefighters hand check each line from coupling to coupling to ensure the integrity of the hose, and then check the connection between two hoses for leaks.

Ronzheimer said that the testing usually finds four to five sections that are damaged and need to be replaced each year from among 362 sections available for use by the fire department. Three sizes of hose are used by the fire department including five inch, two and a half inch, and an inch and three-quarters.

Pin holes, small tears, and failure around the couplings are the most common failures found during the testing.

“We have had hoses burst open when testing,” Ronzheimer said.

Testing all the sections is a long process and usually takes one to two months to complete.

Each shift does quite a bit of testing and tries to fill up the hose tower which is where the hose sections are hung to dry. The other two shifts can remove the hose sections when dry and roll them up so that they are ready for use, and the hose tower is then ready to be filled again to dry the next round of tested hose sections.

Testing, like training, is a continual process for the fire department and includes every tool used and every apparatus operated by the department to ensure not only the safety of firefighters but also citizens and their property.