

# Press Release

To: All News Media  
From: Fire Chief Timothy B. Smith  
Date: September 22, 2023  
Re: Liquefied Natural Gas Fire

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On September 22, 2023, at 10:26 hours, the Toppenish Fire department was dispatched to a reported fire and explosion located in the 600 Block of Buena Way.

The first Toppenish City fire engine arrived on the scene at 10:30 hours and found a pickup truck on fire next to several Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Trailers. Flame from the pickup truck was impinging on one of the mobile LNG trailers. Mutual aid was immediately requested from YCFD#5, City of Zillah, and the City of Wapato. Firefighters located a burn victim West of the incident. Firefighters immediately initiated first aid treatment and moved the victim further from the scene. The victim was transported with life threatening injuries to Memorial Hospital in Yakima.

The Toppenish Police department was requested for assistance with evacuations within a ½ mile perimeter because of the immediate threat of an explosion. Law enforcement agencies from Yakima County Sheriff's Office, Wapato Police Department, Zillah Police Department, Yakama Nation Police, Washington State Patrol, and Yakima County Department of Emergency Management all assisted in evacuations. Yakima County Public Works and Washington State Department of Transportation all assisted in road closures.

An incident command post was set up ¼ mile from the scene and an emergency action plan was developed. Firefighters were contacted by Cascade Natural Gas personnel and advised not to use water if the LNG was pooling on the ground. A drone was launched from YCFD #5 and gave us a first close look at what was burning. The drone video showed that there was no gas leaking from the trailers and that the only fire was from the pickup, wood decking on two trailers and a power pole. Once it was determined safe to enter the scene, firefighters extinguished the fire.

The City of Yakima Fire Department sent their Airport Crash Rescue Truck so that high expansion foam could be applied but it was not needed once it was determined that LNG fuel was not leaking or burning.

Once the fire was extinguished, crews from Cascade Natural Gas entered the scene and determined that the LNG stored in the 8 mobile tanks were stable and secure.

Evacuation notices and road closures were lifted at 13:00 hours.

Cascade Natural Gas has advised that there will be gas outages in the Toppenish, Wapato, Granger, and Zillah areas. They have assembled a massive armada of technicians in the Zillah area, staging at Steward Park and will be canvassing the neighborhoods tonight to turn off all gas meters so that the system can be purged. They are hopeful that gas will be introduced back into the system late tonight or early morning. They hope to start relighting pilot lights in businesses and residents early tomorrow (Saturday) morning.

The cause of this incident is under investigation.