A worker sprays cooling water on a gas tanker Thursday after an explosion damaged the trailer's tractor unit on old Mo. 13 north of Springfield. No one was injured in the incident.

— Staff photo by Art Evans

Explosion damages tractor of tanker at gas station

A loud explosion near gasoline storage tanks at a service station north of Springfield drew four volunteer fire departments who found a tanker truck tractor damaged in a fire Thursday afternoon.

No injuries were reported in the blaze at Five Gables service station on old Mo. 13 a short distance north of the city.

The tires of the tractor exploded when gasoline leaking from the truck ignited while being transferred into the station's above - ground storage tanks, reports said.

The truck still had 5800 gallons of its 7400 - gallon cargo, but did not explode, according to Jim Spiby, a firefighter for the Ebenezer volunteer department. He said the truck's diesel fuel did not ignite either.

Truck driver Joe Garner, 45, of 1355 South Estate, said, "When I saw it burning, I got away from there. I knew what could happen."

What could happen didn't, because the Ebenezer firefighters arrived so quickly, Spiby said. "If we had arrived a few minutes later there would have been big trouble," Spiby said.

"Our firefighters were the first ones on the scene and it was fully involved when we got there," Spiby said.

Volunteer firefighters from Cedarbrook, Walnut Grove and Westside also fought the fire.

The area around the station was blocked off until danger of a second explosion passed, which was about a half hour, Spiby said. Firefighters remained, however, for about three hours.

Damage estimate for the tanker truck cab was $30,000, but no estimate of damage of the storage tanks was available, Spiby said.

4100 N. OLD HWY 13

LONG DISTANCE TOWING
GASOLINE

KNIGHT

Victoria Sta. on 13

July 1976

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