

Fire damages Gopher State Ethanol plant

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Published July 26, 2003

A firefighter was hospitalized after a fire at the Gopher State Ethanol plant in St. Paul Friday night.

He was listed in stable condition at Regions Hospital with shortness of breath, said Deputy Chief Timothy Verros .

The fire , the third since March 2002, started when a piece of insulation fell into a heated area, setting the roof on fire , Verros said.

About 60 firefighters worked the blaze by ripping parts of the roof off, Verros said. He estimated damage between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

The fire is the latest incident for the W. 7th Street plant . Last week, a Ramsey County judge delayed his ruling in a public-nuisance case brought by the city against the plant to take its much-criticized odor out of its emissions or shut down. Residents have complained about noise and odor since Minnesota Brewing started producing ethanol in April 2000.

"Well, I think this is an ongoing reaffirmation that a plant like that doesn't belong in a residential neighborhood," said City Council Member Chris Coleman. The plant is in his ward.

originally published by The Minneapolis Star Tribune