



CITY OF HARRISONBURG  
**FIRE**  
**DEPARTMENT**

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## HFD releases After Action Report regarding Miller Circle explosion

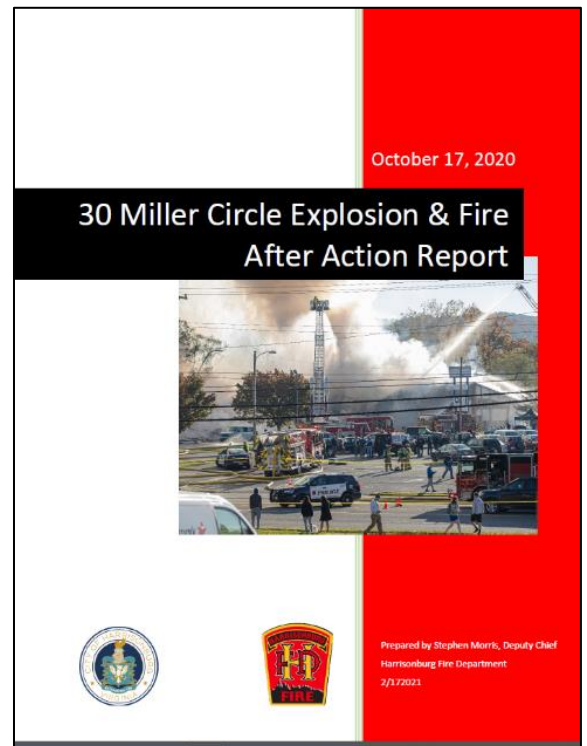
HARRISONBURG, Va. – The Harrisonburg Fire Department’s final report reviewing the response to an explosion and fire that took place on Miller Circle on October 17, 2020, is now available to the public.

The incident, a result of a natural gas leak, destroyed six businesses in a strip mall complex off Main Street and injured several people. The after-action report, available on HFD’s website at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire), details the actions of emergency responders and other entities involved in the incident.

The report details a well-coordinated, efficient and effective response to a complex incident involving multiple agencies. On that morning, an explosion destroyed a commercial building housing multiple, separate businesses. Responders were confronted with the catastrophic collapse of a building that was on fire with an unknown number of occupants still trapped.

Two individuals suffered critical life-threatening injuries while an additional number suffered minor injuries. Structures within a nearly one-mile radius suffered damage from the pressure wave of the explosion.

The report also details a critical analysis of what might have gone better, a national best practice for emergency response organizations. “There is no ‘perfectly handled’ incident,” Fire Chief Matthew Tobia said. “One of our key tenets is to constantly strive for perfection. Our citizens deserve the best and we owe it them to continually seek to improve.”



*The report is available online at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire).*

Also included in the report is a series of recommendations aimed not only at City stakeholders, but the greater fire service. Several of the recommendations have already been accomplished while others continue to be addressed.

No lives were lost in the explosion and subsequent fire on Miller Circle. The last time a similar event occurred in Harrisonburg was in 1947 when 11 people were killed and 19 were injured in a gas explosion in a building on South Main Street near the intersection of East Bruce Street.

**The Harrisonburg Fire Department** is an ISO-Class II All-Hazards agency providing essential emergency and non-emergency life safety services to the public who live, work and travel in Harrisonburg. More information about the Fire Department is available on-line at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire) or on Facebook<sup>®</sup>, Twitter<sup>®</sup> and Instagram<sup>®</sup>.

**The City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).



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