

# SBM Sprinkler Save 12/12/2011

On Monday night 12/12/11, at 7:09 pm SBM Fire responded to a fire at Interpol Laboratories located at 4500 Ball Road. The original call came in as a waterflow alarm. While enroute police on the scene reported that there was smoke in the building and it appeared that sprinklers had activated in the rear of the building. The call was then upgraded to an All Call – Structure Fire response. SBM Fire arrived on the scene and found light smoke in the office portion of the building. A side door was opened into the shop area where heavy “cold” smoke was found and the sprinkler system was operating. There was no visible fire, the sprinkler system had knocked down the fire and had it contained to a racking unit. The first arriving engine was assigned to stretch a line into the building and locate the fire. They made entry and reported that the fire was out and they only had a couple hot spots. The sprinkler system was shut off, the hot spots were extinguished and the building was cleared of smoke. The cause of the fire was improper storage of materials that had been used in a process earlier in the day, which were still hot and placed too close to combustibles. The activation of only three (3) sprinkler heads saved this business. The business also had several dozen compressed gas cylinders in the building. Most were non-flammable but could still explode when heated and pressure built up. There were also a couple hydrogen cylinders, which is a highly flammable gas. None of these cylinders were affected by the fire due to the sprinklers activating.

Tuesday morning Fire Inspector made a site visit and found the business was back up and running with the exception of the process that was involved in the fire the night before. The owner of the business was very grateful for the sprinkler system in the building and the work that the fire department did. He understood the significance of what the sprinkler system did and how it saved his building and business.



**Figure 1 – Fire was located on the other side of this racking.**

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Figure 2 – Location where fire started. Three sprinklers above this location activated and contained the fire.



Figure 3 – Rear of the shop area, no fire extension to other items in the shop.

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Figure 4 – Compressed gas cylinders in rear of shop. Not affected by the fire.



Figure 5 – Origin of Fire

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**Figure 6 – Items stored just three feet away were not damaged.**