



Minnesota Department of Transportation

MEMO

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TO: Adopt-A-Highway Volunteers

FROM: Mary Nieken *mn*
District 3A Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator

DATE: March 2014

RE: Homemade Explosive Device

In 2005 the Adopt-A-Highway program state coordinator at that time requested the information shown on the back of this memo be mailed to all Adopt-A-Highway volunteer groups alerting them of a potential hazard, which a group could come across when picking their section. A few years ago a Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) employee in the Mendota Heights Truck Station found the device shown on the memo. Since this information is still valid, we have continued to provide the information from that earlier memo. Some additional details concerning the device shown are included below.

Cricket is just one name for a small, homemade explosive device. The device in the photo appears to have been constructed using a small carbon dioxide cartridge, probably filled with gunpowder or another explosive, and fused with a homemade or purchased ignition fuse. These types of devices are often used as homemade fireworks, and the components are readily available.

The CO2 cartridges are available at most hobby stores and are used for carbonating beverages, inflating toys, and powering pellet or paintball guns. They are easily refilled with any type of material. Many are constructed of brass. The fuse is readily available from legal fireworks. Cord fuse from small smoke bombs (legal in Minnesota) is waterproof and is often used. Since they are designed to contain pressure, if filled with any explosive and ignited, they could go off like a small hand grenade. Anyone holding such a device would probably lose a hand or worse.

When you go out to perform your next highway pick, please advise your group members to avoid anything that looks like an explosive such as plastic or metal pipes with wires or fuse like devices, live or spent fireworks, oily packages, compressed gas cylinders, etc. and to report the exact location to our office. If a suspected explosive device is found after MnDOT's office hours, local public safety officials and the Minnesota Duty Officer at (800) 422-0798 should be notified.

While it is certainly unsettling, as of 2005, this was only the second time that a device similar to the one shown had been found in the State in the previous 12 years. Should you have any specific questions with regard to the device, reporting a device or hazardous item, please feel free to contact our District Safety Officer, Lisa Dumont, or myself. Lisa's phone number is 218/828-5713 or 1-800-657-3971, Ext. 5713.

Thank you again for your group's participation in the Adopt-A-Highway program and for partnering with MnDOT in keeping Minnesota's roadsides clean.

Safety Alert

Date: June 27, 2005
To: Adopt a Highway Volunteers
From: Minnesota Department of Transportation
Office of Maintenance
Subject: Homemade Explosive Device

MnDOT crews have found a homemade explosive device, sometimes called a cricket, on the roadside in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. If handled improperly the device can explode causing serious personal injury, including loss of a hand. These devices are sometimes used as homemade fireworks at this time of year, and components are readily available.

If you find one, **DO NOT TOUCH IT. CALL 911.** For further information contact the MnDOT Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management at 651-366-3364.

The explosive, pictured below, is about 6 inches long including the wire.

