

New South Wales Fire Brigades Operations Bulletin 2008/08 Automatic Teller Machine Gas Attacks



Issue

There have been a number of recent incidents in Australia and overseas where Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) have been severely damaged when explosive gasses are used in attempts to steal the cash contents. This bulletin was developed with the NSW Police Force to warn NSWFB personnel of the dangers involved and to outline appropriate actions when attending ATM incidents.

Risks

The technique involves filling the ATM with a flammable gas e.g. acetylene or LPG, which is ignited causing a large explosion, damaging the ATM and surrounding building.

The ATM may already be filled with gas on your arrival and may only need a spark or other ignition method to explode.

This explosion may kill or seriously injure anybody standing nearby.

If called to monitor the atmosphere in and around an ATM by NSW Police, NSWFB staff should wear correct PPE and implement control measures based on a risk assessment.

When called to an ATM, look carefully for signs of forced entry, in particular, jemmy marks or similar around the cash dispenser. Be alert for any unusual gas smells, gas cylinders or hoses. Do not allow any ignition source near the ATM.

This Operations Bulletin should be read in conjunction with SOG 10.10 Liquefied Petroleum Gas, SOG 8.1 Bombs and Operations Bulletin 2007/02 Acetylene cylinders exposed to fire or mechanical shock.

The following photographs show post blast scenes and the damage that can be caused by an ATM explosion.



Figure 1 ATM in wall damaged by explosion

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Figure 2 Door blown off hinges by force of explosion shown in Figure 1



Figure 3 Shop front destroyed and awning damaged by force of explosion

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Figure 4 Shopfront destroyed by force of explosion



Figure 5 ATM destroyed by the explosion shown in Figure 4

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Figure 6 Internal partition wall 20 metres from the ATM destroyed when the back was blown off the ATM by the explosion shown in Figure 4

Contact Officer: Name: Insp David Lewis, Operational Safety Co-ordinator

Noted, Station Commander	A	B	C	D	Other

Previous Operations Bulletin: 2008/07 – Orion Gas Detector Extension Probe