

Residents report loud sounds . . .

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Smith said she heard “snapping and cracking and popping. And there was smoke coming out of the building,” she said.

Spectra Energy spokeswoman Marylee Hanley said there was no smoke and no need for the fire company to respond to the station.

She said the incident was simply a pressure release valve acting as it should to release pressure. “It is a protection device. It operated as designed,” she said.

Spectra employees responded along with the fire company. “There was no need for them. The only reason (the fire company) came on our property was to turn around and leave.”

Hanley said “there was no problem.” The release valve “is a protection device,” Hanley added.

“When it’s required to provide some release to the system, that’s what it does,” she said after talking to the area manager for Steckman Ridge.

She said she had no explanation for the different sounds.

“Maybe it was quiet that night. I don’t know.”

The snapping and cracking sound is clearly audible on a homeowner’s video made Saturday evening as Everett firefighters responded.

A failed valve caused at least one other problem in the storage field that caused an emergency response. A failed seal in a well valve failed at Spectra Energy’s well along big Creek Road in October of 2010 causing a venting of natural gas.

The compressor station itself had to shut down its operations a few times several



—Gazette File Photo

The noise that residents said was coming from Steckman Ridge’s compressor station in Monroe Township, shown in this 2010 photo, prompted a visit by Everett Fire Company Saturday night. Residents also said they spotted smoke. A company spokeswoman said Monday there was no smoke and “no incident.”

years ago. Most notably, the station shut down and the company was fined after a malfunction caused gear lubricant to be dispersed over the neighborhood.

The state Department of Environmental Protection fined the company not only for the release but for its failure to notify DEP.

A second, release of oil occurred in October of 2010, prompting a second notice of violation.

Everett Fire Company’s incident report shows firefighters were dispatched at 9:50 p.m. to the compressor station

about 10 miles south of Everett. Volunteers were back in service at 11:09 p.m.

“We responded with all of our units and had Southern Cove on standby,” Ron Morse said. “We confirmed what we had in order to protect the people out there. Once we got there and secured the scene, we released the scene on to (Spectra employees),” Morse said.

Morse, chief of the Everett Fire Company, said he didn’t personally respond to the scene and couldn’t comment as to the smoke residents said they saw.

The only thing that was released was “air,” Hanley said.

“Nothing was released. There was no smoke. No incident.”

Beegle said she smelled an pungent odor Saturday night and had an unusually dry mouth.

“I couldn’t get enough to drink. My tongue felt slick but it was dry at the same time,” she said.

Beegle said, frankly, the compressor station can be scary.

“If that thing explodes, it’s going to wipe out this whole community out here,” she said, adding she had trouble sleeping. “You were terrified. You didn’t know if something was going to blow or what.”