

9-23-2005

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### Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "09/23/2005 - Charleston Fire Department To Conduct Training In EIU Steam Tunnel.pdf" (2005). 2005. 175.  
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05-168

September 23, 2005

For Immediate Release:

CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT TRAINING IN EIU STEAM TUNNEL

CHARLESTON – The Charleston Fire and Rescue Department will be conducting its annual confined-space rescue training in the steam tunnel under Eastern Illinois University's campus next week.

Fire trucks and rescue equipment will be positioned outside of the Human Services Building on the South Quad from approximately 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (Sept. 27-29).

Firefighters will use a tripod, ropes and harnesses to rescue a "victim" from the tunnel.

The training better prepares firefighters for rescuing people from manure pits, sewers, grain silos and similar structures. People entering such areas without proper equipment can pass out from the effects of bad gases and lack of oxygen, said Charleston fire Capt. Richard Edwards.

The exercise will be heavily monitored and operated under strict guidelines from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The department has conducted its confined-space rescue training at its training site just west of Charleston, but they were happy to have the opportunity to utilize EIU's steam tunnel "for something a little more realistic," Edwards said.

Last year, EIU allowed the department to use Stevenson Tower for vertical-rescue training, involving rappelling down the building to "rescue" a dummy.