

What bomb squad members found inside a home southwest of Omaha Thursday was enough to frighten seasoned investigators.

"It's pretty intense," said Jack Malicky, chief investigator for the Nebraska Fire Marshal's Office. "The guys in there right now are still shaking with what we're finding."

Homemade explosives, some described as improvised explosive devices, were found, along with chemicals that investigators believe were used to manufacture the explosives. The more dangerous devices were more like bombs than fireworks, Malicky said.

Homeowner Jeremy Stork and his wife, Andrea Stork, both 33, were arrested on suspicion of felony possession of explosive devices. They were being held at the Douglas County Corrections Center on Thursday night.

They face possible state and federal charges, said Douglas County Attorney Don Kleine.

Investigators carefully sifted through the Storks' home, 18654 Nina St., throughout the day Thursday, wearing long-sleeved shirts to diminish the risk of static electricity that could cause a spark.

One device was so unstable, that bomb squad members took it to a safe location near the home and detonated it about 3 p.m. The "live" device needed only a spark to set it off. The blast was equivalent to 10 M-80s or several sticks of dynamite, said Sgt. Rob Jones of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

In addition to the homemade explosives, investigators found a cache of commercial grade fireworks and several containers of chemicals used to manufacture explosives. Malicky said it was clear Stork was making the explosives inside his home.

But he wasn't sure why.

"I think it was just a hobby. We don't see any reason to believe he wanted to hurt anybody," Malicky said.

In searching the house, deputies also found fully automatic weapons, some with silencers, which are illegal, said Chief Deputy Marty Bilek.

Neither Stork nor his wife, who married in 2002, have any criminal history. He is an accountant, and she works for a data company, according to sheriff's records.

Both declined a request for an interview.

They each have display operator's permits for fireworks through the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Office.

But manufacturing, and storing, explosives is not legal in a residence, Kleine said, nor is it safe.

The immediate area around the Storks' house was evacuated throughout the day as investigators worked.

Rep. Lee Terry is among their neighbors in the upscale housing development. Terry's home wasn't evacuated, but it caused concern for his wife, Robyn, and their three sons.

"I'm sure there are going to be a few bedtime questions the next couple of nights about what would happen if that house had blown up and whether (the kids) are safe," Robyn Terry said. "That's something we had to deal with after 9/11 and, obviously now on a lesser scale, we may have to deal with over this experience."

She said the evacuations also inconvenienced the neighborhood.

"One of those houses (evacuated) is a friend with two children and another is a friend with two golden retrievers. They had a long day of keeping those kids and dogs entertained."

A Douglas County sheriff's deputy discovered the explosives after spotting a delivery truck about 2:30 a.m. while patrolling the neighborhood northwest of 180th and F Streets, Bilek said. After talking with the driver, the deputy learned that he was delivering fireworks to the Storks' house.

Deputies then searched the house's garage and found at least 1,600 pounds of explosives, Bilek said.

Jeremy Stork consented to a search of the garage but would not consent to a search of the rest of the house, so deputies had to obtain a search warrant, Jones said. They found chemicals in a 35-gallon drum and in buckets in the basement.

A number of law enforcement agencies, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, bomb squads with the Omaha Police Department and the Nebraska State Patrol, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, and the Nebraska State Fire Marshal were on scene.

The case evoked memories of a 2005 incident in Ralston, in which more than 2,000 pounds of commercial-grade fireworks were found in a home. The fireworks were found after one of the devices was shot off, landing in a pool and seriously injuring a 13-year-old boy.

That case prompted Ralston Fire Chief Kyle Ienn to campaign heavily to increase awareness of fireworks safety.

There were no injuries from Thursday's discovery, but the possible dangers to the neighborhood were on everyone's minds.

"If this would have ignited, it would have done damage to several houses nearby," Bilek said. "It would have been catastrophic if it would have exploded."

World-Herald staff writers Kevin Cole, Laura Inns and Lynn Safranek contributed to this report.

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