

Second Resident Succumbs to Injuries from New Bedford Fire

A second victim has died of injuries sustained during Thursday's fire on Chestnut Street, said New Bedford Fire Chief Scott Kruger, New Bedford Police Chief Paul J. Oliveira, State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey, and Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn, III.

District Attorney Quinn's office identified the victims as Radames Lopez Mendrez, 78, and Eneida Gonzalez Mangual, 79.

"On behalf of Mayor Jon Mitchell and the New Bedford Fire Department, I want to offer our most sincere condolences to this family at a time of such terrible loss," said Chief Kruger. "This was the second fire in three weeks to claim two members of our community, and our hearts are with all the loved ones who are grieving today."

The New Bedford Fire Department responded to a single-family home at 260 Chestnut St. following 9-1-1 calls at about 1:40 pm. On arrival, they encountered heavy fire showing from the upper story. Firefighters used ground ladders to make entry through windows and up an interior stairway. They rescued one man and one woman, both of whom were older adults and later succumbed to their injuries. Two other adults were able to escape the building and were also transported for medical care; two children escaped unharmed.

Investigators determined that the fire began in a second-floor bedroom. The cause will remain officially undetermined but investigators found no evidence that it was intentionally set, and the potential factors were accidental.

"More than 85% of this year's fire deaths took place at home,"

said State Fire Marshal Ostroskey. "In addition to working smoke alarms on every level of the residence, every household should have a home escape plan. Take some time this weekend to create a plan with two ways out, and practice both of them so you know what to do and where to go in an emergency. Remember that older adults face the greatest risk of death or serious injury in a fire and may need assistance getting out quickly."

The fire was investigated by the New Bedford Fire Department, New Bedford Police Department, State Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office, and State Police assigned to the Bristol County District Attorney's office.