



CITY OF MUSCATINE
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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 25, 2018

THREE DEAD FOLLOWING HOUSE FIRE IN MUSCATINE MONDAY

Cause remains undetermined in deadly house fire on Clinton Street Feb. 25

MUSCATINE, Iowa – An investigative team from the Muscatine Fire Department, Iowa State Fire Marshall Office, and the Muscatine Police Department continue to investigate a house fire Monday (Feb. 25) night that left three people dead and one critically injured.

The Muscatine Joint Communications Center (MUSCOM) received a 911 call at 6:39 p.m. Monday of a house on fire in the area of 1820 Angle Street in Muscatine and moments later further identified the location as a single family residence at 104 Clinton Street. The Muscatine Fire Department (MFD) was informed that there was a possible entrapment while responding to the scene and that was confirmed once crews arrived at the scene.

MFD personnel found fire coming from several windows and doors on the north and south sides of the structure upon arrival. Muscatine Police had found a subject outside a window and brought that person to MFD paramedics who immediately transported the person to Trinity Muscatine in critical condition. He was subsequently airlifted to the University of Iowa Hospital in Iowa City.

Fire broke through the front windows facing Clinton Street as crews initiated a fire attack in the extreme heat, smoke, and flame conditions. They found multiple rooms in a post-flashover state

that occurs when the entire room is on fire. Firefighters found three people deceased once they entered the rooms that were on fire.

Investigation began at 7 p.m. while fire crews were continuing their fire suppression operation with investigators on the scene until 4:15 a.m. Tuesday (Feb. 26).

Review of the damage found in the house led investigators to a certain location called an “area of origin” that is the general location where the fire started based on evidence observed at the scene. An area of origin can be large or small with the area found at this fire scene typical in that it was a small area in a room and thus not usually large or small.

An area of origin is only part of the physical investigation as the investigators must determine a source of ignition in order to determine the cause. Unfortunately, this fire at had multiple potential sources of ignition in the area of origin and none could be determined to be the cause. The cause of this fire, therefore, remains classified as undetermined.

There were smoke alarms in the house but the operation of the alarms is not known.

The names of the deceased are being withheld pending confirmation of the identities by the Muscatine County Medical Examiner’s Office and notification of the next of kin. Autopsies will be performed at the University of Iowa to determine the exact cause of death for these individuals.

One pet cat was rescued and is being cared for at a local veterinary office. The American Red Cross was called to the scene and will be providing support as they can. One fire fighter suffered a minor injury while fighting the fire, but did not require medical attention.

There was heavy fire damage throughout the first and second floors, and smoke and water damage throughout the basement. The house will likely be considered a total loss. Present value of the structure is assessed at \$57,000, and all contents were lost as well. Total loss is estimated in excess of \$80,000.



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The Muscatine Fire Department was assisted by the Fruitland Volunteer Fire Department, Wilton Volunteer Fire Department and the Muscatine Police Department. Approximately 30 fire fighters responded to the fire, including some off duty personnel.

The Muscatine Fire Department would like to recognize the Iowa State Fire Marshal and the Muscatine Police Department for their assistance in the investigation.

Fire Department officials also reminds residents to take a few minutes today and check alarms to ensure they are functioning properly.

The last fatality in a civilian residential fire in Muscatine came on June 18, 2003.

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