



City of
OAKLAND
California

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Update from the City of Oakland on the 31st Avenue Fire at 4:30 p.m.

As of 2:30 p.m. on Monday, December 5, the number of located and recovered victims is 36. Twenty-two victims have been positively identified and their families have been notified. An additional 11 victims have been tentatively identified and three victims need scientific identification.

Today, Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley shared the details of the launch of her office's criminal investigation into the fire. The District Attorney's Office has activated the criminal investigation teams and is actively looking at this with all of the other law enforcement partners. In the coming days, after the recovery phase is completed, our focus will shift to a thorough investigation of what occurred. We are committed to bringing every resource to bear to determine what happened here and how such a tragic event could have occurred. Our priority is to bring closure to this tragedy for the victims' families.

As District Attorney O'Malley highlighted, members of the victims' families may be eligible to receive financial assistance through the California Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP). For details on this and other victim services, please visit http://www.alcoda.org/victim_witness/.

At a 2:30 p.m. media briefing, Alameda County Sheriff Ahern shared images of the inside of the building at 1315 31st Avenue and recovery efforts undertaken. The images are available at <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/w/OAK061771>.

The City of Oakland extends condolences to the families who have received the dreadful news that one of their loved ones perished in the fire. Previously, the names of seven (7) identified victims were released. They include:

Cash Askew, 22, Oakland, Calif.
David Cline, 24, Oakland, Calif.
Nick Gomez-Hall, 25, Coronado, Calif.
Sara Hoda, 30, Walnut Creek, Calif.
Travis Hough, 35, Oakland, Calif.
Donna Kellogg, 32, Oakland, Calif.
Brandon Chase Wittenauer, 32, Hayward, Calif.

An additional victim is a 17-year-old minor whose name will not be released.

Personnel from the Oakland Fire Department; Oakland Police Department; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; Alameda County Sheriff's Office; Cal OHSa; Alameda County Search and Rescue and Oakland Public Works Department continued the painstaking work of recovering the victims from the scene of the fire. At this time, about 70 percent of the building has been searched. We anticipate this will remain an active recovery scene for at least the next day.

In order for first responders to complete the recovery process, it was determined that a large crane was needed. To safely operate the crane, it was necessary to de-energize nearby power lines. Thanks to careful planning, the planned outage impacted 12

residential and commercial PG&E customers. The power was turned off at 3:20 p.m. The planned outage is anticipated to last at least 12 hours.

In addition to PG&E's phone notification, outreach teams from the City's Neighborhood Services Division and Economic Development Department paid personal visits to both commercial and residential customers. If customers have any questions about the outage, they may call PG&E at (800) 743-5002.

Recovery efforts in a portion of the building were suspended this morning around 12:15 a.m. due to precarious building conditions. While a plan to stabilize that wall, recovery work resumed in a different area of the building. Debris removal and victim recovery continue. Currently, 70% of the building has been cleared.

The focus of our efforts remains the recovery of victims. This recovery will be undertaken in a methodical and thorough process in a humane and compassionate manner to ensure that the victims are recovered and identified, and to make sure their families have this information as expeditiously as possible.

The Family Assistance Center, established by the Alameda County Coroner's Bureau in coordination with the American Red Cross, continues to operate at 2425 E. 12th Street. Family members and friends looking to locate loved ones may go to the center between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Grief counseling and resources are available to families affected by this tragedy. We are requesting that only families and loved ones go to the Family Assistance Center and ask that the media respect the privacy of families at this time.

The public may access the latest updated information on the City's website at oaklandnet.com or at (510) 238-2181. **Please do not contact the Alameda County Coroner's Bureau unless you believe a family member may be a victim of the fire.**

Background

A three-alarm fire broke out on Friday, December 2, at 11:32 p.m. at 1315 31st Avenue in Oakland. The fire has resulted in a terrible tragedy.

The Alameda County Sheriff's Office will be managing the victim identification process and working with the Oakland Police Department to provide additional updates.

The last permitted use of the building was as a warehouse. On November 13, 2016, the City of Oakland received complaints of blight and unpermitted interior construction at the building. On November 17, 2016, a City building inspector visited the property and verified the blight complaint, but could not gain access to the building to confirm the other complaint regarding unpermitted construction. This is an ongoing investigation.

Our city has experienced a tremendous tragedy. As a community, we can come together in recovery and spirit. The Oakland A's have set up a site for donations for Oakland Fire Victims at

<https://www.youcaring.com/oaklandfirevictimsfrom130531staveinoakland-706680#mlb-oakland>. The Gray Area Foundation for the Arts has set up a sit for

donations at

<https://www.youcaring.com/firevictimsfoaklandfiredec232016-706684>.