



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Frostburg, Maryland: One Dead in House Fire, Two Injured

February 15, 2014 (1:50pm) ... Update: Newburyport, Massachusetts

According to the Office of News and Media Services, Frostburg State University, President Jonathan Gibraltar said the deceased was, as they feared, one of Frostburg's students. His name was Lateef Gazal, and he was a senior in their Business Administration major. Lateef lived in Bowie and was a member of Delta Sigma Pi, the professional business fraternity; the Marketing Association; and the African Student Association.

Two other people were able to escape the fire. They suffered minor injuries and were transported to Western Maryland Health Center, say fire officials. Another person who lives in the unit was not home at the time of the fire.

According to Fire Fatality Statistics produced by The Center for Campus Fire Safety, this is the 85th fatal fire involving a student that has **that occurred on a college campus, in Greek housing or in off-campus housing - claiming a total of 122 victims.** 72 of these fatal fires have occurred in off-campus housing claiming 103 victims.

February 14, 2014 ... Newburyport, Massachusetts

Tragedy struck the community of Frostburg, Maryland, today when an early morning



fire, occurring at around 5:00 a.m., lead to the death of one person and the injury of two others. The house where the fire occurred, located on the 100 block of Bowery Street in Frostburg, was heavily damaged by the fire; reports state that the second floor collapsed during the fire. Prior to the fire, the house had been renovated as rental housing for college students. It is unknown at this time if the deceased or the injured persons were students at nearby Frostburg State University.

Frostburg State University's press release, regarding the fire, did not list the name of the departed nor did it state if the departed was a member of their campus community. The University's press release did state that three individuals were displaced by the fire and are members of their campus community. Frostburg University has provided housing for these displaced students.

The Maryland State Medical Examiner's Office has not yet released the identity of the deceased, as their investigation into the death is currently ongoing. Further, no cause for the fire has been released at this time. Finally, it is not known if the house had smoke alarms or a residential fire suppression system. As we learn more about this fire, we will continue to update you.

The Center for Campus Fire Safety reflects on this tragedy and also wants to remind everyone of the **importance of properly installing and maintaining smoke detectors and other fire prevention equipment**, in accordance with prescribed codes and standards. But let's look beyond requirements and ask ourselves what else we can do to avoid potential loss of life from fire.



- Plan your **escape routes** - Identify windows and doors, know two ways out and determine an escape route **before the fire**. Always choose the safest escape route - the one with the least amount smoke and heat. Be prepared to get low under smoke if necessary.
- Keep **escape routes clear** - do not allow objects to be stored in halls or stairwells. Make sure windows can be **easily opened**.
- **Inspect the exterior door** at bottom of stairwell. It must be able to be opened without a key from the inside. **Door cannot be blocked** by snow, cars or other objects.
- Keep an **emergency escape ladder** on upper floors. Follow manufacturer's instructions for the safe use of emergency escape ladders. Only purchase emergency escape ladders evaluated by a recognized testing laboratory. Only use the ladder from upper floors in a real emergency.
- **Choose a meeting place in advance** - Pick a highly visible area, a safe distance away from the flames, to meet in case of fire related emergency.
- **Be prepared** - Practice your emergency exit routes with each occupant. Practice crawling low to avoid toxic smoke from a fire. Practice feeling doors for heat before opening. Practice opening windows. Practice using an emergency escape ladder from the first floor.
- Use a portable fire extinguisher **only** if you know how and can do so safely. **Before using a fire extinguisher call 9-1-1 and sound the fire alarm**. Fire extinguishers are useful only for very small fires, like those contained in a small waste basket. If the fire is larger that, exit the building immediately.



To learn more about The Center and its programs, visit www.campusfiresafety.org.

For additional information:

Fire Fatality Statistics and Definition:

<http://www.campusfiresafety.org/firefatalitystatistics>

Continual e-news -campus fire & safety:

<http://www.campusfiresafety.org/News>

Campus Fire Safety Resources: <http://www.campusfiresafety.org/resources>

About The Center for Campus Fire Safety (The Center)

The Center for Campus Fire Safety (The Center) is a non-profit, member focused organization devoted to reducing the loss of life from fire at our nation's campuses. The mission of The Center for Campus Fire Safety is to serve as an advocate for the promotion of campus fire safety. The Center serves as the focal point for the efforts of a number of organizations and also as a clearinghouse for information relating to campus fire safety. Visit us at www.campusfiresafety.org for more information.

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