

## Two found dead, several jumping to safety after apartment fire breaks out

Horry County, S.C. (WPDE) Two were found dead and several others were jumping to safety after a fire broke out at an apartment building on South Orcas Street on Monday evening causing an estimated two million dollars in damage.

When officers arrived on the scene, people were leaning from the third story of the apartment building and screaming. Several people jumped into the arms of the police officers.

"The officers literally held out their hands to break the fall of residents jumping out the window," said Robert Kegler, the Horry County Police Department Public Information Officer.

The fire department arrived a few minutes later and laddered the walls to rescue the remaining people.

"By the time we got to the bottom of the ladder my apartment was on fire. Another 60 seconds and I would have been dead," said apartment resident, Susan Wilkers.

John Ericson, the man who called 911 regarding the fire, says the officers deserve an award.

"That was just amazing! I ain't never seen anything like that before. Somebody should give those guys a medal," said Ericson.

While firefighters were fighting the fire, a man and woman were found dead inside.

Several people were injured including an officer with a broken arm and two jumpers with broken legs. A second officer suffered minor burns and two firefighters were treated for heat exhaustion. All are expected to recover.

The call came in Monday at 6:05 p.m. from a neighbor who reported flames at the apartment building. The fire was tapped by 6:45 p.m.

More than three dozen firefighters were on the scene and 47 people were displaced. The building is too unstable for investigators to go inside, but Horry County Fire Rescue Public Information Officer, Brian VanAernem, hopes to have the building stabilized by early Tuesday morning for investigators.

The cause of the fire is unknown and there is no information regarding the two deaths is available at this time.