



DES PLAINES FIRE DEPARTMENT
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OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Dec. 22, 2021

Des Plaines and North Maine Fire Personnel Rescue Elderly Woman from Burning House

Des Plaines and North Maine Fire Departments rescued an elderly Des Plaines woman from a burning home this morning. She is currently being treated at Lutheran General Hospital for smoke inhalation, and is reportedly in stable condition. The victim's identity is not available at this time.

At approximately 6:36 a.m. Dec. 22, the Des Plaines Fire Department (DPFD) sent an ambulance to 51 N. East River Road in Des Plaines in response to a call of a 71-year-old woman having difficulty breathing. North Maine Fire Protection District also responded with its fire engine as its station is closer to this property. Upon arriving on the scene, personnel found smoke and flames. They quickly reacted, getting into their firefighting gear to respond to the working fire. In coordination with dispatch, they confirmed the caller was on the second floor.

The Des Plaines team placed a ladder to the second-floor window while the North Maine team stretched a water line, both forcing entry into the building. A Des Plaines firefighter/paramedic searched and located the victim in heavy smoke conditions with very little visibility. Working with the rest of the team, they removed her out of the second-floor window and down a ladder. She was transported to the hospital by ambulance.

Meanwhile, fire personnel worked to control the fire, completing extinguishing it in less than 20 minutes.

The building is a side-by-side duplex. The victim occupied the north unit. The other unit was vacant. The entire building is uninhabitable due to significant fire damage to the first floor, heavy smoke damage throughout and multiple ventilation holes that were cut in the roof. It's unclear at this time how many people reside at the two residences.

The Des Plaines Fire Department is investigating with the assistance of the Des Plaines Police Department and Office of the State Fire Marshal, and the incident remains under investigation. The following fire agencies also provided assistance: Niles, Park Ridge, Morton Grove, Mount Prospect, Wheeling and Prospect Heights.

DPFD reports that numerous cats were found in the residence and some did not survive. Animal Control took possession of all of the cats.

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