



## NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

*Mark A. Hartwig  
Fire Chief*

**DATE:** *Thursday, March 14, 2013*  
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### **STRUCTURE FIRE CLAIMS LIFE OF ELDERLY FEMALE**

**Date/Time:** March 14, 2013 02:13 am  
**Location:** 9700 block Hemlock Avenue Fontana, California  
**Incident:** Residential Structure Fire with Fatality

**Summary:** At 02:13 am, Thursday, March 14, 2013, the San Bernardino County Fire Department responded to a report of a structure fire in the 9700 block of Hemlock Avenue in Fontana. The first arriving unit reported light smoke coming from a single story, single family residence. They also noted a male, later to be identified as a resident of the house and son of the deceased, sitting on the tailgate of a pick up at the residence. The male appeared to be dazed and suffering from smoke inhalation.

As the fire crew made entry into the house, they were able to see an elderly female unconscious on the floor. They rescued her from the smoke charged building and began life saving measures. Ambulances were requested for both the female and male patients, and additional crews were assigned to attack the fire. It appears that there was a small fire that had been smoldering for some time thus causing a high amount of smoke to build up. The rest of the fire was extinguished without incident. Both victims were transported to a local hospital where the female ultimately succumbed to her injuries.

According to investigators, a neighbor had gone outside to smoke a cigarette when he noticed fire showing through a window of the house. The neighbor then attempted to alert the occupants by pounding on doors, windows, and the truck in the yard. The male occupant came out and attempted to extinguish the fire with a garden hose. It was not clear at press time if the house was equipped with working smoke detectors. Two family pets also perished, and a third was taken into the care of family members.

In all, three Engines Companies, two Medic Squads, one Truck Company, one Battalion Chief, one Arson Investigator, the Sheriff's Arson/Bomb Squad, and two AMR ambulances responded to the incident. The cause remains under investigation.

Smoke detectors do save lives. It is a good practice to replace the batteries in your smoke detectors at least twice a year. A rule of thumb is when the time change occurs, so should a change of batteries in your smoke detectors.

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