

NEW BEDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

871 ROCKDALE AVENUE · NEW BEDFORD, MA · 02740



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Lieutenant Jeffrey P. Silva

Public Information Officer

Office: 508.979.1688

Email: jpsilva@newbedford-ma.gov

See Also: 2008-3961

POLICE OFFICERS RUSH INTO BURNING BUILDING AND RESCUE FAMILY PETS

New Bedford, Massachusetts – Four New Bedford Police officers rushed into a six-family house that was fully engulfed in flames this morning just after 1:30 AM in an attempt to evacuate and rescue its occupants. The officers then re-entered the house after one of its residents told officers that her pets were trapped inside.

New Bedford Police Officers Meghan Toromino, Paul Lagoa, Wayne Morris and Nathan Monteiro responded to a 911 call about a house fire in the early morning hours in the south end of New Bedford and found the six-family tenement house located at 12 Cleveland Street ablaze. Prior to the arrival of the Fire Department and without the benefit of any protective clothing or breathing apparatus, Officers Meghan Toromino, Paul Lagoa, Wayne Morris and Nathan Monteiro rushed into the burning building to attempt to evacuate its occupants and rescue a third floor tenant that was trapped by flames.

Although the staircase was completely engulfed and impenetrable, when one of the residents told the officers that her pets were trapped inside, the officers re-entered the burning building, navigated through the smoke-filled apartments, and managed to locate and rescue (2) cats and (1) dog that were trapped inside. Despite the police officers' heroic efforts, (3) other cats that were hiding inside ultimately perished.

Upon the arrival of the Fire Department, a ladder was raised to the 3rd floor where a resident who was trapped was successfully evacuated by New Bedford Firefighters. With the exception of the (3) cats, all residents of the building were successfully evacuated and, although all the police officers were treated at the scene for smoke inhalation, nobody was seriously injured.