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Smoke Inhalation Results in Death of 85-Year-Old Man After Home is Destroyed by Fire

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Home in Mars Hill, St. Croix destroyed by fire in the wee hours of Monday morning (March 27, 02023). By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — An 85-year-old man was pronounced dead early Monday morning after his home was destroyed by fire.

The V.I. Fire and Emergency Medical Services (VIFEMS) announced that it responded to a structural fire early Monday in Mars Hill and discovered that a wooden structure was engulfed in flames.

According to VIFEMS, emergency responders received a 911 call reporting the fire, which prompted units from F Company and V.I. Police Department officers to respond to the scene.

Upon arrival, emergency responders immediately began efforts to extinguish the fire and secure the area, VIFEMS said.

"Tragically, one fatality has been reported, and there are no further reports of injuries at this time," the fire department said.

According to the police department, the victim was identified by next of kin as 85-year-old Rafael Russel, whose home was destroyed by the fire. His death was caused by smoke inhalation, according to the Medical Examiner's Office.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation, and VIFEMS said it is collaborating with local law enforcement and fire investigation teams to thoroughly examine the scene.

"Updates will be provided as more information becomes available," stated VIFEMS, which also shared condolence remarks to the family of the deceased.

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