

Bodies of Two Workers Recovered From Residential Construction Site

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville Fire Chief James Whiteford said Saturday the bodies of two construction workers who had been operating at a residential development in the 100 block of East Union Street were recovered Friday, August 19.

He said the two men were found deceased in a manhole that led to storm sewer piping. The Edwardsville Police and Fire Departments responded to the scene at about 6:55 p.m. Friday for a 911 call about a person in need of rescue from a manhole.

It's believed the two workers had entered the manhole sometime in the late afternoon. Fire Chief Whiteford said the atmosphere where the men were located was found to contain very little oxygen and a buildup of toxic gases, as is common in confined underground spaces.

The two men were nonresponsive, and rescue was attempted. Upon determining the men were deceased, the operation transitioned to a recovery effort. The victims were recovered about 8:30 p.m. Friday.

A member of the Edwardsville Police Department who was among the first to respond was taken to a local hospital for evaluation Friday night. He was later released.

Whiteford said 18 fire personnel were involved in the rescue attempt at the scene. Thirteen of those – eight from Edwardsville and five from other agencies - are members of the Technical Rescue Team, a division of the Madison County Emergency Management Agency. The remaining five were Edwardsville first responders who are not on the Technical Rescue Team.

Because of the conditions in the manhole, the recovery required more advanced breathing equipment, Whiteford said. An investigation is continuing; no additional details are available.