Welding Safely Fatality File



3 dead, another injured after fire caused by welding accident.

CLOVIS, N.M. (KRQE) – It appears a welding accident led to a deadly fire in Clovis. Three people were killed one was seriously injured.

State Fire Marshals were at the scene Monday of the deadly fire in Clovis.

"This is one of the largest losses of life we've seen," said Clovis Police Captain Roman Romero.

The three deceased are John Sandoval, 54; Robert Elebario, 51; and Billie Grabowsky, 52.

Rogelio Hernandez was the only one who survived the fire. He's being treated at Plains Regional Medical Center in Clovis.

"I asked him what happened and what does he remember, and he said they were just in the shop welding a piece of pipe to a car and they noticed the gas can nearby had caught a spark," explained Rogelio's niece, Casandra Hernandez.

She says they threw the gas can at the wall, which caught the insulation and ultimately, the whole building on fire.

"He said everything happened so quick, all they knew was that they needed to get out because they were inhaling all of that smoke," she said.

Stuck inside the shed, they began trying to push out an air conditioning unit. Nearby neighbors heard yelling and ran to help.

"They got the unit out but then they started pulling him out and he was trying to help one of his other friends out and he couldn't get his friend out," Casandra Hernandez said.

Rogelio Hernandez was the only one to make it out alive. He is expected to be okay.