



Marion County Board of County Commissioners

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FIREFIGHTERS RESPOND TO EXPLOSION AT LOCAL FARM; ONE EMPLOYEE AND ONE HORSE KILLED

Immediate Release

MARION COUNTY, Fla. (Feb. 10, 2012) – More than 20 Marion County Fire Rescue firefighters and personnel from six MCFR stations responded to an explosion this morning at Ocala-area Kesmarc Farm and Equine Rehabilitation Center (15530 W. Highway 326).

On scene, responders confirmed that a 28-year-old woman was dead; a 33-year-old female trauma patient was airlifted to Shands at the University of Florida with serious injuries. Five MCFR Engines, two of which were special operations teams (Haz-Mat and Technical Rescue), responded to the incident and were joined by two rescues (ambulances) and a tanker.

The explosion occurred at a large building containing stables and involved a hyperbaric aquatic chamber, a cylindrical machine about 12 feet in diameter that utilizes compressed oxygen to help rehabilitate horses. The horse inside the chamber at the time of the explosion also died.

The explosion did not result in a working fire but caused partial collapse of the building's southwest corner, where the hyperbaric aquatic chamber was located. The approximately 30 other horses housed in the building at the time of the explosion were not injured. Horse owners were notified of the incident and have evacuated their animals from the building, which has been deemed unsafe.

The Marion County Sheriff's Office, OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration), Marion County Medical Examiner's Office and Florida State Fire Marshal's Office were also on scene. The Florida State Fire Marshal's Office is investigating the cause of the explosion.

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