

**DEPARTMENT of  
PUBLIC SAFETY**

**PUBLIC  
INFORMATION  
OFFICE**



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**Ras J. Baraka, Mayor  
Brian A. O'Hara, Public Safety Director  
Raul Malave III, Assistant Public Safety Director  
Lee Douglas, Chief of Police  
Rufus L. Jackson, Chief of Fire**

**For Immediate Release**

**June 1, 2021**

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## **VIDEO**

### **One Newark Firefighter Injured at 2-Alarm Fire in Rectory of St. Lucy's Church**

#### ***Two Police Officers Observe Smoke with One Entering to Evacuate 10 People***

Newark Public Safety Director Brian A. O'Hara reports that a Newark Firefighter suffered 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns to his ears and neck while fighting a 2-alarm fire in the rectory of St. Lucy's Church after two Newark Police Officers called in the fire, with one entering the building and evacuating 10 people today.

"I commend 2<sup>nd</sup> Precinct Officers Thomas Johnson and Veronica Rivera for their swift action in notifying the Fire Division as soon as they observed smoke coming from the rectory," Director O'Hara said. "And I can't thank Officer Johnson enough for his bravery in going inside the building and personally evacuating two priests and eight other individuals before firefighters arrived. His concern for the wellbeing of community members and his commitment to saving lives is exemplary. The immediate response of Newark Firefighters in aggressively fighting this fire is also commendable," Director O'Hara added. This incident could have been much worse had it not been for their diligence and determination to get this fire under control."

Officers Johnson and Rivera were patrolling the area just before 2:35 p.m. when they observed smoke emanating from the rectory, located at 118 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. They contacted the Fire Division and Johnson entered the building to assist those inside to safety.

Responding firefighters located a fire in a sun porch area at the rear of the building. The fire extended to the building's 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and roof. A 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm was called at 2:50 p.m. with some 70 firefighters responding to the scene. The injured firefighter was transported to St. Barnabas Medical Center for treatment. No other injuries have been reported. The fire was considered under control at 3:26 p.m. Two priests, who reside at the rectory, have been relocated.

The cause and origin of this fire is under investigation by the Department of Public Safety's Arson Unit.

**VIDEO LINK: [https://youtu.be/a\\_AI4GEe1M4](https://youtu.be/a_AI4GEe1M4)**



May 31, 2021 – 2-Alarm Fire, Rectory of St. Lucy’s Church, 118 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue