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Eight People Hurt in Manhattan Apartment Fire

Oct 25, 2003 3:30 pm US/Eastern

Eight people, all in their 20s, were injured in a fire that swept through a Manhattan building Saturday, drawing tenants to the street as their landlord arrived, the Fire Department said.

A 21-year-old woman was burned and in critical condition at the New York Weill-Cornell Burn Center after the blaze that broke out just before 5:30 a.m., said Firefighter Jack Thompson, a department spokesman.

Flames engulfed the third floor of the six-story residential building on East 18th Street in the Gramercy Park neighborhood, and spread to the fourth, he said.

Four other victims were taken to New York Weill-Cornell. A 22-year-old woman was in serious condition there, and another woman and two men in their 20s were stable, said Thompson.

Two young men suffering from smoke inhalation were admitted to Bellevue Hospital, and the eighth victim was treated at the scene.

More than 100 firefighters responded to the blaze, which was brought under control at 6:11 a.m. Two of them were taken to Beth Israel Medical Center for shoulder and back pains, treated and released.

The cause of the fire was under investigation.

Landlord Steve Croman arrived at the scene at about 7:30 a.m. with a cleanup crew. He declined comment.

Cynthia Roberts, an artist who lives in the next-door building that Croman also owns, said some of Croman's apartments are rent-stabilized and others have been renovated and draw higher rents.

"Some of us live in rent-stabilized apartments, and we've had no heat or hot water for months," Roberts said.