

Floor Collapses At Miss. Church Center; 35 Injured

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LAUREL, Miss. (AP) -- Authorities say the second floor of an activity center at a Mississippi church collapsed during a youth service, sending about 70 people tumbling and injuring 35 of them.



Linda Cranford, spokeswoman for the Jones County Fire Council, told The Chronicle in Laurel ([HTTP://BIT.LY/ND2MCX](http://bit.ly/ND2MCX)) that 35 people were hurt but none of the injuries were life-threatening.

She says a 16-year-old girl was taken to a hospital in Hattiesburg with a head injury after the floor collapse Wednesday evening at the Freedom Baptist Church in Myrick.

She said 19 others were taken to a hospital for treatment. Authorities say most were later released. Witnesses say injuries included scrapes, cuts and possibly some broken bones.

Cranford did not immediately answer calls from The Associated Press for comment.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. Check back soon for further information. AP's earlier story is below.

The second floor of an activity center at a rural church in southern Mississippi collapsed during an evening youth service, sending about 70 people tumbling and injuring at least 15 of them, authorities said.

None of the injuries appeared life-threatening though a 16-year-old girl was taken to a hospital in Hattiesburg with a possible head injury after the floor collapse Wednesday evening, authorities said. The hospital told The Associated Press it had no information to release on the girl's condition early Thursday.

Pastor Tommy Davis at Freedom Baptist Church in Myrick told The Chronicle in Laurel ([HTTP://BIT.LY/ND2MCX](http://bit.ly/ND2MCX)) that the floor at the activity center collapsed as dozens of youth were gathered for a Wednesday evening gathering of worship.

"In the middle of the student service, the floor - which is a second-story floor - gave way, causing about 70 students to fall," Davis said. "But it's got to be said that no one was seriously injured, no one was trapped. God's hand was certainly taking care of the kids who were in that building."

Spokeswoman Linda Gavin at the South Central Regional Medical Center, said at least 15 young people were treated there and all were later released.

Authorities had previously said there were 35 injuries but many of those were subsequently described as minor. Witnesses described a range of injuries, including cuts, scrapes and possible broken bones.

Gavin told the paper that a 16-year-old girl was taken to a Hattiesburg hospital with a possible head injury but she gave no additional information.

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Students said the collapse came unexpectedly while the service was under way.

"We heard a huge rumble and the floor collapsed and people collapsed with it," said one 18-year-old female student. She said stunned students were tossed all about.

Witnesses said the youngsters attending the service were in the 7th to 12th grades.

Dozens of those who tumbled were shaken but had only minor injuries and were released at the scene once they were checked out by emergency crews. Worried-looking relatives stood by amid the flashing lights of ambulances and emergency vehicles in the aftermath.

Jones County Sheriff Alex Hodge said the drop was about 12 feet in the floor collapse.

Dispatcher Amanda Lofton at the Jones County Sheriff's Office told AP early Thursday she had no additional information to release about the injured and that authorities had no preliminary report on what caused the floor collapse.

Myrick is a small rural community northeast of Hattiesburg in southeastern Mississippi.