

Planned Parenthood Evacuated Over 'Unknown Substance'

Monday, a Planned Parenthood clinic in Sarasota, Florida, triggered a "hazmat emergency" because an unknown substance was discovered inside.

As a result, the 38 people inside the building at the time were evacuated—eight were taken to local hospitals for evaluation—two hazardous materials teams were called in to assist with decontamination, and a nearby school was placed on "lockdown." According to local media accounts, some who were in the building reported shortness of breath in response to the substance, and some were carried out on stretchers.

Once the situation was back under control, the Sarasota Police Department issued an official statement:

A powder substance was found in a stairwell inside Planned Parenthood, and it's been determined it was baby food.

Hazmat teams examined cleaning closets and found chemicals unknown to them so they were "overpacked," which means they were packed up and brought out in a double stacked container. The power is off at Planned Parenthood, everyone is out, no one is allowed in.

At this time there is no criminal investigation. Workers are expected back inside the building this afternoon. Originally, it was reported that six people were being transported—that number is eight now.

Seven people were transported to Sarasota Memorial Hospital and one declined medical assistance. Symptoms are respiratory—shortness of breath. No one has life-threatening injuries.

Thirty-four additional people that were in the building are on an air conditioned bus outside the facility. They are showing no symptoms.

Crews are expected to remain on scene for another hour or so.

The local law enforcement agency issued another "clarification" about an hour after that:

The illnesses were caused by unknown cleaning chemicals. Once crews got on scene, they packed them up and removed them.

During the evacuation, powdered baby food was spilled in the stairwell and that was a cause of concern until it was ruled out and discovered that it was baby food.