

5 Killed in Berkeley Balcony Collapse

Five people including a number of young Irish citizens were killed and eight injured when an apartment balcony collapsed early on Tuesday in the Californian city of Berkeley, police and Ireland's foreign affairs minister said.

The survivors' injuries were "very serious and potentially life-threatening," Berkeley Police Department spokeswoman Jennifer Coats said.

Callers first reported the collapse at the multi-story block in the downtown area of the college city near San Francisco at around 12:45 a.m. local time, she added.

Irish Foreign Minister Charlie Flanagan confirmed that an unknown number of young Irish citizens were among the dead and injured.

"It is too early to know the full extent of this dreadful accident. My heart goes out to the families and loved ones of the deceased and those who have been injured," he said in a statement.

Thousands of Irish students travel to the United States on temporary working visas every summer.

Coats said police were working with the fire department and city officials to work out what caused the collapse.

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