

Man dies following self-inflicted vehicle fire at Aliso Beach

On Tuesday, Dec 18, at 9:09 a.m., at the 31100 block of S Coast Hwy, Laguna Beach Emergency Services received an emergency call about a vehicle fire. Local residents, including those dining at nearby Lost Pier Café, also reported the sound of a large explosion.

Sadly, according to LBPD Spokesperson PIO Sgt Jim Cota, "This was self-initiated and so far appears to be an attempt of suicide. There was no bomb, but an excessive amount of gas was located, so it appears the sound of an explosion was the gas and fire igniting the vehicle."

The man involved in this tragic incident is described as a 56-year-old man from Lake Forest. Sgt Cota said no drugs were involved.

The man was pulled from his vehicle by emergency personnel after at least one local resident was unable to extricate him on their own due to the significant car damage sustained.

The man, who was still alive as of Thursday after being transported to Orange County Global Hospital in Santa Ana by Mercy Air, died this morning (Friday, Dec 21), according to a message from Sgt Cota.



LBFD Division Chief Api Weinert said the man sustained "Head to toe burns, all the way from the head to the toe. I would say the gamut from first, second and third-degree burns."

Chief Weinert reiterated Sgt Cota's statement that a bomb was not responsible for the vehicle fire.

"It was not a bomb. Although bystanders did report hearing a loud explosion,

anytime you have confined combustion, you can hear what sounds like an explosion or a pop," LBFD Chief Weinert said.

The event was hard to fathom and to experience.

"Even though we see horrible accidents throughout our careers, it doesn't mean they don't accumulate over time or just that one accident that some of our members haven't seen before won't affect us," Chief Weinert said. **"We reached out to Trauma Intervention Program (TIP), not just for ourselves but for bystanders. They are an incredible organization. TIP made contact with the civilians, police officers, firefighters, and first responders that were there."**

Holidays are a particularly rough time of year for depression and death.

"A lot of people think we're really slow, but we're actually really busy," Chief Weinert said. "The holidays can be an intense time for people."

Suicide prevention help is available. If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, please reach out to www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In Orange County, you may also [visit this site](#).

Know the warning signs. Some warning signs may help you determine if a loved one is at risk for suicide, especially if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change. If you or someone you know exhibits any of these, seek help by calling the Lifeline. Behavior includes:

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Extreme mood swings