Hash-oil operation suspected in fatal San Bernardino County explosion

By Veronica Rocha
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Authorities who say they found significant amounts of marijuana and butane in the debris of a blown-up home believe a hash-oil operation may have caused a massive explosion that killed a man and injured two others.

Those inside the makeshift home may have been producing "butane honey oil" when it exploded, said Cindy Bachman, spokeswoman for the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

Firefighters sifting through the ruins found the man's remains in what appeared to be a basement, she said.

The explosion occurred at 6 p.m. Wednesday in a home located in the rear of a property in the 3000 block of Gray Street in Muscoy.

Firefighters found a man outside the home with severe burns, according to the San Bernardino County Fire Department. A woman was partially covered by debris when firefighters found her.

She suffered a serious head injury as well as blunt-force trauma, fire officials said.

The basement area sustained significant damage during the blast, causing the poorly constructed home to collapse into it.

"The blast was so significant that the freshly paved road in the front of the surrounding homes actually buckled in several places," the Fire Department said in a statement.

Firefighters first believed the explosion was caused by a gas leak, but later determined it stemmed from illegal drug activity.

"Butane honey oil" is a waxy substance that can produce a strong high when inhaled. It doesn't have the potent odor of marijuana.

Because hash oil has gained popularity, some beginners have attempted to make it in their homes. But that has resulted in several explosions, officials say.

Two men accused of operating a hash-oil extraction laboratory were burned in a similar explosion in March in the city of Commerce.

A suspected drug lab at a home in Malibu exploded in April, injuring one person, authorities said.