



Yakima Police Department

News Release

Subject: Child Strangulation

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Release Date: Wednesday, January 12th, 2022

Stepmother of 4-year-old Charged with 2nd Degree Murder in Child's Death

The stepmother of a 4-year-old boy who died from strangulation Wednesday evening has been charged with 2nd degree murder in the death of the boy.

On January 12, at about 11:00 pm, Yakima police responded to Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital after hospital staff called 9-1-1 to report that there was an unresponsive child enroute to the hospital via private vehicle. The 4-year-old male child arrived at the hospital with no pulse and was not breathing. Doctors and nurses performed CPR on the child for 30 minutes before the child was pronounced dead.

A Yakima police officer who responded to the hospital noted several large bruises on the boy's body. The boy's 25-year-old stepmother also made statements that raised suspicion.

Detectives from the Yakima Police Department's Special Assault Unit were called to the hospital to continue the investigation. During their interview with the stepmother, she admitted to strangling the child at their residence in the 1100 block of McKinley Avenue.

The stepmother was booked into the Yakima County Jail on a charge of 2nd degree murder.

The Yakima office of Washington State's Child Protective Services (CPS) was notified of the incident. CPS staff took two other children living in the residence in the 1100 block of McKinley Avenue into protective custody.

"At this point, the boy's father, who was at work at the time of the incident, is not a suspect in the homicide," Yakima Police Captain Jay Seely said. "This is such a tragic end to this young child's life. I want to commend the Memorial Hospital staff for their work and the Special Assault Unit detectives who worked through the night investigating this case," said Seely.

Yakima police are not releasing the name of the stepmother until she appears at a preliminary hearing in Yakima County Superior Court, which is expected to take place on Friday.

An autopsy has yet to be scheduled.

Anyone with information that may be relevant to this case is urged to contact the Yakima Police Department at 509-575-6200 or by calling 9-1-1. Tips can be also be reported to Yakima County Crime Stoppers by phone at 1-800-248-9980, on the organization's website at www.crimestoppersyakco.org, or through the "P3 Tips" app at <http://p3intel.com/mobileapp.htm> that can be downloaded for free.

