

Willowbrook probing burn injuries to 9

Authorities at Willowbrook Developmental Center have launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding superficial burns that were apparently inflicted on nine of its residents in Building 13 sometime last weekend.

The burns, described by Joyce Libra, a spokesman for Willowbrook, as "small, minor, superficial burns about the size of a dime" were termed "suspicious."

She said that the burns "most likely occurred between 3:30 p.m. Friday and 3:30 p.m. Saturday." She said that when the first burned patient was noticed, all the residents in Ward B, where the incidents occurred were examined and another eight injured residents were found.

The residents of the ward were described as "all non-ambulatory, non-verbal, young

adults." The spokesman said, "We do not know the nature of the burns." She said that three residents of the building had smoking privileges but were in a different ward. She said no residents had access to matches.

She said the "investigation is still in progress" and statements were being taken from everyone who had access to the ward over the weekend. Two of the affected residents had two burns, and the rest had one each.

In another incident, a 26-year-old resident, whose name was withheld, died at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, apparently as the result of choking. The preliminary cause of death report, as prepared by a Willowbrook doctor, said that "stomach contents were aspirated into the trachea and location."