

# Teens killed in abandoned mine

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. (AP) — Three teen-agers who collapsed and died while exploring an abandoned coal mine apparently were felled by suffocating gas so deadly that "all it takes is one breath" to kill, a mine expert says.

A fourth member of the group was in serious condition, suffering from oxygen deprivation.

Blackdamp, a mixture of carbon monoxide and nitrogen feared by miners, was detected in the mine Monday, said Jim Diamanti, a mine manager who helped recover the bodies.

"All it takes is one breath of it and you're literally knocked down and you can't function. If somebody doesn't pull you out, you're dead," Diamanti said.

"Your body quits working. Your mind doesn't, but your body immediately quits working and you can't move."

Killed on Sunday were Chistian



Rossman, 15; Catherine Schrettner, 16, and Greg Folchert, 17. Autopsies were planned. Frank Warner, 16, was in serious condition at St. Mary's Hospital after being pulled from the cave.

Sheriff's Lt. Wayne Harms said the teen-agers, along with two oth-

ers — Miles Slape, 17, and Abby Roberts, 16 — drove to the mine Sunday night. Slape told authorities he entered the mine first but came out when he had trouble breathing.

"The others didn't believe him so they went inside and they never came out," Harms said.

Slape and Roberts heard their friends choking and tried unsuccessfully to re-enter the mine. Neither had keys to the two cars they had driven, so they ran and walked five miles through the desert to a motel to call for help.

Rescuers found the bodies about 400 feet inside the cave, just beyond a pile of rubble they suspect kept the blackdamp inside the cave.

They theorized that Warner, who was found atop the rubble, was high enough to avoid the low-lying layer of blackdamp.

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