



## 3 teenagers die in Sarasota Ringling Causeway crash

By Timothy Fanning  
Staff Writer

Posted Jun 19, 2019 at 9:04 AM

Updated Jun 19, 2019 at 8:51 PM

One passenger was ejected before the vehicle caught fire, police say.

SARASOTA — A deadly crash on the John Ringling Causeway near Bird Key Drive snatched the lives of three teenagers just after midnight Wednesday after the driver lost control, struck the sidewall of the bridge and then a tree. A female passenger was ejected from the vehicle.

The Sarasota Police Department has identified the victims as Oscar Flores, 19, Daniel Flores, 17, and Isabella Paoletta, 15. Oscar and Daniel were brothers. All were Sarasota residents.

The Flores family suffered another loss in March, when Oscar Flores Sr., 39, the father of Oscar and Daniel, died.

Just after midnight, a four-door sedan with the three teenagers inside was traveling westbound over John Ringling Causeway Bridge toward St. Armands Circle, according to police. For unknown reasons, the driver lost control.

Police are still trying to identify who was behind the wheel, said Police Spokeswoman Genevieve Judge.

The sedan then caught fire, which was extinguished by members of the Sarasota County Fire Department. After the flames were put out, the Flores brothers were found dead inside the vehicle.

It is still unknown if speed, alcohol or drugs were a factor in the crash, said Judge.

The three students all had been enrolled in the Sarasota School District at one point, according to School District spokeswoman Tracey Beeker.

Paoletta had attended Sarasota High before enrolling at Riverview, where she was due to continue in the fall.

Oscar Flores had attended Sarasota High School before dropping out during the 2016-17 school year, and his brother Daniel was enrolled in Acceleration Academy, a credit recovery program. The Academy is a small community, and Beeker said many students knew him there. The district sent grief counselors to work with students.

“At the end of the day, all details aside, this is an absolute tragedy,” said Judge. “These are two families that now have to bury their children. It’s heartbreaking.”

The cause of the crash remains under investigation. Anyone with any information, videos or photos related to this crash are asked to call Officer Jason Frank at 941-364-7370.

*Herald-Tribune staff writer Ryan McKinnon contributed to this report.*