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HEADLINE: District Toddler Dies in Fall From Sixth-Floor Window

BYLINE: David A. Fahrenthold, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

A 13-month-old District boy died yesterday after falling from a window in his family's sixth-floor apartment. Police said the death appeared to be an accident. Jorge Martel's mother was not aware that the toddler had fallen until she walked past the Sutton Plaza apartments shortly after noon and saw him lying in an alley outside the building, at 1230 13th Street NW, according to a police investigator at the scene last night.

The child, who neighbors said was the youngest of three, was dead when he arrived at Howard University Hospital with his mother about 12:30 p.m., fire and hospital officials said.

It was unclear last night who, if anyone, was home with the boy when he fell. The investigator at the scene said police believed there was no screen on the window but would not comment on how the boy reached the window, which appeared to be about three feet above floor level. District Fire Department spokesman Alan Etter said the toddler suffered severe head injuries.

The boy's death was under investigation last night by the D.C. police special victims unit, a new detail charged with investigating the deaths of children younger than 8. Sgt. Joe Gentile, a D.C. police spokesman, said the death probably was an accident.

The apartment was empty last night, as family members talked to police at the 3rd District station on V Street NW. The parents, whose names were not released, have two other sons, about 12 and 4 years old, neighbors said. They said the family was friendly and had lived in the building for at least four years.