



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Frigid Temperatures Bring Concerns

State Fire Marshal shares tips on staying warm while avoiding harm.

Baton Rouge, LA – As colder weather settles across Louisiana this week, the State Fire Marshal wishes to remind everyone that the improper use of heating equipment such as portable space heaters, is a leading cause of residential fire deaths.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), approximately one-half of fires during the months of December, January and February are associated with home heating appliances with half of those resulting in deaths. The main culprit: placing flammable items too close to heat sources such as electric/gas heaters, fireplaces and wood stoves.

To help families stay warm while preventing fires this winter, the State Fire Marshal encourages residents to follow these safety tips:

- Adopt a “3 Foot Rule,” where children and/or flammables are kept more than three (3) feet away from any heat source.
- Avoid using your kitchen oven to heat your home.
- Have chimneys and heating equipment cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional.
- If using a chimney, ensure that you have a spark preventing screen placed in front of the chimney.
- When using a wood or gas burning fireplace, properly install and maintain a carbon monoxide detector. Remember: Carbon Monoxide is known as a “silent killer” because it is odorless.
- When leaving a room or going to bed, make sure to turn off all portable heaters.
- Test smoke alarms monthly. Immediately replace batteries if needed.

“Fire safety only works when we remain vigilant and knowledgeable as to how fire starts and taking steps to prevent it from starting,” said State Fire Marshal H. “Butch” Browning.

If you or a loved one cannot afford a smoke alarm, the State Fire Marshal strongly encourages you to participate in the Operation Save-A-Life program where local firefighters and/or fire prevention personnel will install a free smoke alarm in qualified homes.

You can find out more by either contacting your local fire department or by going to the State Fire Marshal website at www.lasfm.org and clicking on “Fire Is Everyone’s Fight™” and then on “Operation Save A Life” to complete the application.

It should be noted that the “Fire is Everyone’s Fight™” is a partnership program created by the United States Fire Administration and is implemented by participating agencies with the focus of lowering the number of fire deaths and injuries nationwide. The Louisiana Office of State Fire Marshal is proud to be involved in this great effort and more information on how you can become a partner will be available in the coming days.

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