



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections • Public Safety Services

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### Provençal Woman Dies in Mobile Home Fire

**NATCHITOCHEES PARISH-** State Fire Marshal (SFM) deputies continue to investigate the circumstances surrounding a house fire involving one death in Provençal from over the weekend.

Just before 11 p.m. on Saturday, September 28, Natchitoches Fire District #4 responded to a mobile home fire in the 7400 block of Highway 478 in Provençal.

Upon arrival, firefighters located the body of an elderly woman inside. While official identification and cause of death are still pending with the Natchitoches Parish Coroner's Office, the victim is believed to be the 81-year-old homeowner.

After an assessment of the scene, SFM deputies determined the fire began on the front porch of the home, however, an exact cause is still under investigation. At this time, deputies do not consider the cause suspicious.

Investigators learned that the victim was a smoker known to light and discard her cigarettes while sitting on her front porch. SFM deputies also discovered during their assessment of the scene that the home was filled with an excessive amount of combustible objects, some of which impeded easy access to exits. Deputies were informed the homeowner often left candles lit around those many combustible objects.

The SFM would like to encourage all residents to follow simple smoking safety practices including lighting up outside only, discarding all smoking materials in an appropriate ash tray away from combustibles, ensuring they are fully extinguished, and keeping all smoking materials out of the reach of children. When using candles, it is advised to keep them at least a foot away from flammable materials and never leave them unattended; if you can't see the candle, the candle should be extinguished.

And as the 2019 Fire Prevention Week approaches next week, October 6-12, with the theme "Not Every Hero Wears A Cape. Plan and Practice Your Escape," the SFM would also like to encourage all residents to develop and practice a home fire drill plan that makes all occupants aware of at least two, unblocked exits out of every room in the house with clear pathways to them. Occupants should also be familiar with ways to easily and quickly navigate the home in darkness due to effects of smoke or disorientation due to panic.