



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Man Dies in St. Martinville Shed Fire

ST. MARTIN PARISH (October 11, 2020)- State Fire Marshal (SFM) deputies continue investigating the circumstances surrounding a late night fire inside of a shed in St. Martinville that claimed the life of the property owner.

Around 10:45 p.m. on October 10, the Cade Volunteer Fire Department responded to the 1700 block of Smede Highway in St. Martinville for a report of a fire inside of a large, metal maintenance shed where a generator had been operating for several hours following Hurricane Delta.

Firefighters later located the body of the 86-year-old property owner inside. Official identification and cause of death is pending an autopsy by the St. Martin Parish Coroner's Office.

Following an assessment of the scene and obtaining witness statements, SFM deputies determined the property owner went into the shed to refuel the generator, likely while it was still hot. Shortly after refueling, a fire was noticed in the shed. Investigators believe the man went into the shed to attempt to extinguish the fire, but never reemerged.

"This is an incredibly unfortunate loss of life," said State Fire Marshal Chief H. "Butch" Browning, "We want all Louisianans to not only take the generator safety tips we've been sharing very seriously, but also remember simple fire safety tips that we promote often, especially 'get out, stay out.'"

The SFM would like to take this opportunity to highlight the three main generator safety tips we have been stressing since Hurricane Laura several weeks ago and are repeating now in the wake of Hurricane Delta:

- DON'T place a generator inside of ANY structure
- DON'T place a generator near open doors and/windows (20 ft away from the home is ideal)
- DON'T refuel a generator when hot

Lastly, if you are using a portable generator, make sure you also have a carbon monoxide alarm to help alert you to any danger that you cannot see or smell.

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