



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Fire Marshal's Office Receives Grant for Smoke Alarm Program *Agency Reminds Residents to Practice Safe Home Heating*

BATON ROUGE- The Louisiana Office of State Fire Marshal (SFM) is proud to announce its selection as a federal grant award recipient allowing the agency to obtain thousands of smoke alarms to increase home fire safety across Louisiana.

FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate's Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 *Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant* award, totaling \$168,750, will boost the SFM's smoke alarm inventory to more than 15,000 units for the agency's Operation Save-A-Life program.

Operation Save-A-Life partners the SFM with local fire departments and districts to provide FREE smoke alarm installations, at any time of the year, for families in need of assistance accessing the critical emergency-alert equipment.

Despite this year's current home fire fatality count, 59, falling well below the number of lives lost by this time in 2020, 77, the SFM encourages ALL families to have working smoke alarms in their homes. This is especially important with frigid temperatures predicted across the state to start off 2022 as cold weather is often associated with an uptick in residential fires.

"We are thrilled that our Operation Save-A-Life program was considered worthy of the support of this sizeable grant," said State Fire Marshal Chief H. "Butch" Browning, "This opportunity to access so many of these live-saving devices comes just in time for consistent cold temperatures to settle in across our state."

The top safe-heating tips we are offering families include:

- Place space heaters 3-5 feet from combustible objects like blankets and curtains
- Plug all heating appliances directly into wall outlets, not power strips or extension cords
- Do not use stoves or ovens to heat homes
- Don't overfill fireplaces/wood burning stoves
- Do not leave candles/open flames (or space heaters) left unattended
- Have working smoke alarms in your home!

In addition, carbon monoxide, or CO, can also be a hazard when it comes to heating your homes. Carbon monoxide, often referred to as "the invisible killer," is an odorless, colorless gas created when fuels like gasoline, wood, coal,

natural gas, propane, oil and methane are actively burning. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel, like furnaces, stoves, water heaters and fireplaces, can be sources of carbon monoxide.

When it comes to avoiding CO hazards associated with home heating, have those appliances, including chimneys, inspected by a professional every year before cold weather sets in. And when using a fireplace, make sure the flue is open for adequate ventilation.

If you don't already have a carbon monoxide alarm for your home, it is strongly advised to get one. Getting a combination carbon monoxide alarm and smoke alarm is even better.

In addition to having working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, the SFM also emphasizes the importance of having planned and practiced escape routes for your home that include knowing two ways out of every room.

To register for a free smoke alarm, or learn more about Operation Save-A-Life, visit lasfm.org.

