



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Fire Marshal Makes Open Burning Safety Plea Following Red Flag Warning, Open Burning-Related Death

BATON ROUGE- State Fire Marshal Dan Wallis is making a plea to all Louisianans to be aware of the high fire danger conditions across the state this week.

The U.S. National Weather Service Office out of New Orleans has issued a 'Red Flag Warning' for southeast Louisiana throughout today, Tuesday, Sept. 27, indicating dangerous wildfire conditions exist where fire can become uncontrolled quickly.

"This alert is the result of a lack of rain, the drop in humidity that occurred overnight, and the expectation of increased winds due to the presence of Hurricane Ian in the Gulf," said Wallis, "Even though this warning is for a certain portion of the state, we are asking all residents to please avoid any open burning this week, just as a precaution, for your safety and the safety of those who live around you."

This plea comes a day after State Fire Marshal deputies investigated the death of a Heflin man that is believed to be related to the victim open burning on his property. The 67-year-old's death is the fifth this year attributed to open burning accidents.

"This is an unprecedented statistic for our state and it should be alarming to everyone," said Wallis, "These tragedies are preventable and the prevention effort starts with avoiding open burning altogether when weather conditions like dry grass, dry air and high winds come together like they will this week."

Open burning is defined as setting fire to any trees, branches, grass, leaves, brush, or debris by private property owners for non-commercial purposes. Open burning safety tips include:

- Ensuring weather conditions, including wind speed and direction, are safe for burning
- Establishing a burn pile at least 75 feet from any structures
- Creating a 5-foot wet control line around the area
- Avoiding the use of flammable liquids to ignite a burn pile
- Remaining vigilant over the fire with a water source nearby at all times
- Alert a loved one or neighbor of your activities or conduct them with help
- If the fire does get out of control, call 911.

Also, remain aware of and compliant with any local restrictions on open burning and follow the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's guidance on legal open burning materials which can be found on the agency's website deq.louisiana.gov.

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