



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Four Die in Hornbeck Trailer Fire

VERNON PARISH- State Fire Marshal (SFM) deputies continue investigating the circumstances surrounding a late night mobile home fire that claimed the lives of four people and two pet dogs.

Around 11:45 p.m. on October 2, the Hornbeck Fire Department responded to the 100 block of J Hext Road for a report of a trailer on fire with people trapped inside. Firefighters later located the body of a husband and wife, ages 57 and 54, respectively, as well as a 31-year-old woman and a 19-year-old man. Two other adults were able to escape the fire unharmed.

Official identifications and causes of death are pending autopsies by the Vernon Parish Coroner's Office.

Following an assessment of the scene and obtaining witness statements, SFM deputies believe the fire began in the kitchen/living room area of the home and is likely electrical in nature. However, the official cause remains undetermined at this time.

Investigators are looking into several recent issues with the electrical system in the trailer, including a concerning reaction that followed the family connecting a generator directly into their electrical outlets when Hurricane Laura knocked power out to the area. It was also reported that the family had turned their heater on last night for the first time this fall season.

Deputies learned that the two people who were able to escape heard a popping sound seconds after the power suddenly went out. When they opened the door to their bedroom to investigate, they found the trailer filled with smoke and immediately got out. The survivors reported that the 57-year-old homeowner did escape with them, but went back inside to try to help get the remaining family members out.

There were no working smoke alarms in the trailer at the time of the fire, unfortunately, due to the devices being removed when battery replacement was needed, as opposed to changing the batteries.

"The loss of these four family members is tragic in so many ways," said State Fire Marshal H. "Butch" Browning, "We want Louisiana residents to realize the significance of having smoke alarms when a fire emergency occurs, no matter the cause."

The State Fire Marshal's Office offers a program called Operation Save-A-Life that partners with local fire departments to provide families in need with free smoke alarm installations. You can learn more about the program on lasfm.org.

Browning added, "I want to repeat a message we shared across Louisiana earlier this week about home heating safety—make sure your heating systems are in good condition before using them for the first time. And if you have any concerning electrical activity occurring in your home, especially after using a generator during a power outage, reach out to a licensed professional to have your wiring examined."

Electrical issues of note can include breakers tripping and outlets sparking, smoking or not working. In these instances, the SFM advises turning off the breaker to the concerning area of the home, or the entire home, until an electrical inspection can occur.

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