



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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Elderly Man Dies in Christmas Eve Fire

FRANKLIN PARISH- The State Fire Marshal's Office was contacted Christmas Eve morning to assist with investigating the origin and cause of a fatal fire in Gilbert.

The identification and cause of death of the victim, the 74-year-old male resident of the home, is pending with the Franklin Parish Coroner's Office.

The Winnsboro Fire Department received a 911 call at 7:15 a.m. about a residential structure fire located in the 1400 block of Cooters Point Road.

Investigators learned an elderly couple was in the home at the time of the fire. The female survivor told investigators she was starting a fire in a wood stove when the carpet caught fire. After attempts to try to put the flames out with baking soda were unsuccessful, she woke up her husband, who also tried to put out the fire.

The female survivor told deputies when the smoke was too thick to breathe, they opened the front door to escape and the fire "exploded." She escaped through a window and suffered a minor injury to her hand. The male occupant never emerged from the home.

The SFM would like to remind residents of several safety tips following this unfortunate incident:

- Keep combustible furniture, carpet, etc. away from stoves and fireplaces.
- Keep a working fire extinguisher in your home and near stoves and fireplaces. If one is not available, keep water nearby for emergencies.
- While baking soda can help smother small grease fires on stoves, it is not good for this type of emergency as it will create a blinding cloud of smoke.
- When a fire is out of control, just get out. Your possessions are not worth your life.

- Have working smoke alarms! Visit lasfm.org to learn about Operation Save-A-Life, which is a partnership between the SFM and local fire departments and districts that provides free smoke alarm installations across the state.

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