



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Fire Marshal Urges Fire Safety Vigilance Through End of 2020

BATON ROUGE, LA- State Fire Marshal Chief H. “Butch” Browning is urging Louisiana residents to commit to fire safety awareness as we approach the remaining few weeks of 2020.

“It’s unfortunate to report that, so far this year, 70 souls have been lost to fire. While that is currently less than the fatality counts of the past few years, it’s too many and we don’t want to see anymore,” said Browning.

Last year, 75 people died due to fire. The year before, 77 lives were lost. In 2017, again, 75 people were killed in fires.

In the past two weeks, six people have died in fires, including the latest fatal fire which occurred in Lafayette last night. While most of those causes remain officially undetermined and under investigation, unsafe heating practices are believed to be contributing factors in at least two. In addition, deputies are seeing an uptick in cooking-related fires among the calls received to assist with fire investigations.

“What we are seeing across Louisiana *can* be prevented,” said Browning, “We just all have to be vigilant about the potential fire hazards in our homes and make a concerted effort to avoid those hazards for the safety of everyone in our homes.”

The following heating and cooking tips can help you and your loved ones stay safe:

- Home Heating:
 - Place space heaters 3-5 feet from combustible objects like blankets
 - 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
- Cooking:
 - Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stove
 - Stay in the home when you are cooking any food item
 - Keep cooking environments free of clutter and combustible materials
 - Keep children at least three feet away from the stove, sharp objects and hot foods and/or liquids
 - Avoid cooking when tired, distracted or under the influence
 - Keep a lid close by in the event a small, stovetop fire occurs that can be smothered by placing the lid over it and turning off the heat

- If an oven fire occurs, turn off the heat and leave the door closed
- When a large cooking fire occurs, get yourself and any other occupants out of the home immediately and call 911 for help
- Keep electrical cords, matches and lighters out of the reach of children
- Keep the kitchen space clear to avoid tripping hazards
- Make sure you have working smoke alarms!

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

