



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pineville Man, Teen Die in House Fire

RAPIDES PARISH- State Fire Marshal (SFM) deputies have concluded their investigation into a house fire in Pineville that claimed the lives of two residents including a teenager.

Just before 2:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 18, the Pineville Fire Department responded to a report of a house fire located in the 500 block of Grant Street. When firefighters arrived, they located four people outside of the home reporting that two more were still inside. Unfortunately, their bodies were later located in what was believed to have been the stairwell and the living room which was below a second-floor bedroom that had collapsed into the living room.

While official identifications and causes of death are pending with the Rapides Parish Coroner's Office, the victims are believed to be a 54-year-old man and a 16-year-old girl.

Deputies learned there were six people in the home at the time of the fire—a grandmother and her brother, her two adult sons and two grandchildren, one a 16-year-old girl and the other a 5-month-old boy.

Following interviews with the survivors, deputies learned everyone in the home was asleep in the house except one individual who returned home late after a work shift. The man reported seeing the front porch on fire several minutes after coming back inside from smoking a cigarette. He told deputies he first woke up his brother who was sleeping in the living room then attempted to put the fire out with water. He then went upstairs to alert the rest of the occupants which included his mother and the two young relatives who were all sleeping in the same room. The man told deputies he helped his mother out of a second-story bathroom window before dropping the baby to his brother below who caught the infant safely. Once he also escaped out of the second-story window, the group realized the teen and the grandmother's brother were still inside.

At this time, deputies have determined the fire began on the front porch and was an accident related to smoking near combustible materials. In addition, the family also reported using the home's oven to warm the house overnight. While the oven is not believed to be the initial cause of the fire, it is a dangerous home heating practice that the SFM would like to remind Louisiana families not to utilize when cold weather hits. Other home heating safety tips 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, ovens, or grills to heat homes
- Don't overfill fireplaces/wood-burning stoves
- Do not leave candles/open flames (or space heaters) left unattended

When it comes to safe smoking practices, the SFM always advises smoking outdoors and ensuring smoking materials are fully extinguished and discarded in appropriate containers. Also, keep smoking materials, especially spark-producing objects like lighters, out of the reach of children.

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