



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Home Heating Safety Urged Following First Fatal Fire of 2024

WASHINGTON PARISH- State Fire Marshal Chief Bryan J. Adams is putting out a call to action for home heating safety vigilance following a fatal house fire in Mt. Hermon believed to have been caused by the use of a space heater.

At 11 p.m. on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, Washington Parish Fire District #9 responded to a call for a house fire located in the 38000 block of Bill Simmons Road in Mt. Hermon. Firefighters arrived to find an injured man outside of the home reporting another man still inside. Unfortunately, firefighters did locate a deceased victim in a bedroom.

Official identification and cause of death are pending with the parish Coroner's Office, however, the victim is believed to be the 82-year-old bedridden homeowner.

After an initial investigation, deputies determined the fire began in the room where the victim was found and was likely caused by a space heater in use at the time of the fire or the electrical components the space heater was plugged into.

"Our coldest months are our most deadly months for house fires," said Adams, "But the common heating-related causes of these fires are preventable. We want every family to know what fire hazards to be aware of and how to fix those before they threaten lives."

The top 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, especially if wires are frayed or worn
- 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

Lastly, there were no working smoke alarms in this home. Chief Adams wants to stress to all Louisiana residents that smoke alarms have proven to be the difference between life and death in a fire emergency. If you need assistance obtaining smoke alarms for your home, Operation Save-A-Life can help. To learn more about Operation Save-A-Life,

or to register for a free smoke alarm, visit our website at lasfm.org or contact your local fire department to request a free smoke alarm installation.

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