



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections
Public Safety Services

8181 Independence Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.lasfm.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Deputy Chief Brant Thompson

Release#:

Office: 225-925-4604

Date: January 13, 2015

Cell: 225-247-6251

Unattended Toddlers Die in Fire; Mother Charged

Bastrop, LA – Two sibling toddlers lost their lives Monday in an early evening fire in Bastrop, and the mother of the children is facing criminal charges for leaving them home unattended.

While investigators of the State Fire Marshal's Office are still piecing together their findings in the tragic fire that occurred on Pruett Street, one thing is certain: Ciarria Johnson, 21, the mother of 4-year-old Ta'shae Thompson Johnson and her 3-year-old brother, Clifton Thompson Johnson, left her children unattended for hours as she was having her hair styled.

Johnson told investigators that prior to leaving her house at approximately 1:00 p.m., she had made preparations with a neighbor for the care of her children. Johnson also stated that there were two (2) gas space heaters in operation in the residence when she departed and that upon her return the single-family, wood-framed structure was completely engulfed in flames.

However, investigators later determined that Johnson, in fact, had made no such arrangements and that she had returned home only after being contacted about the fire.

A thorough examination of the scene by investigators revealed that the control valve to a gas heater in the living room, where the fire is believed to have originated, was found in the "on" position. Investigators also determined that the cause of the fire was the close proximity of flammable materials to the space heater.

Johnson has been charged with two (2) counts of negligent homicide in the death of her children.

END - END - END