



# 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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**Date: January 24, 2016**

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## Tangipahoa River Fire Leaves One Dead, One Injured

**Ponchatoula, LA** – A wood-burning stove is the suspected cause of a deadly fire that resulted in the death of a Ponchatoula man and burn injuries to a female friend late Saturday night.

State Fire Marshal investigators responded to a structure fire involving a camp on the Tangipahoa River, located approximately four (4) miles from Lee's Landing Marina in Ponchatoula, after the Tangipahoa Sheriff's Office requested assistance.

The structure, described as a small, wood-framed camp, and accessible only by boat was burning upon the arrival of firefighters and investigators. Water from the river was used to suppress the blaze, which ultimately destroyed the structure.

The fire was reported by neighboring campers shortly before 11:00 p.m. Saturday after Elizabeth P. Piner, 54, fled the burning structure, driving a boat to the nearby camp seeking assistance. Piner received 2nd degree burns to her hands and forearms, lessor burn injuries to her face and head, as well as smoke inhalation. She was transported to the Baton Rouge General Medical Center by an Acadian Ambulance helicopter.

Investigators learned that Piner was sleeping in the sole bedroom of the camp, being accompanied by a friend, Joel Hall, when she was awakened by the effects of smoke. Upon observing flames in the area of a wood-burning stove, the sole source of heat for the camp, she attempted to locate Hall. Being unsuccessful and sustaining burns herself, Piner drove Hall's boat to a nearby camp for help.

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After the fire was extinguished, investigators located a body, believed to be that of Hall, 57, of Ponchatoula in the living room/kitchen area of the structure. After being examined by investigators, the body was released for autopsy.

Investigators have determined that the origin of the deadly fire was at or near the wood-burning stove, indicating an accidental cause, as the camp had no connected electric power. A generator used for lighting is believe to have not been on at the time of the fire.

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