



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Smoke Alarm Saves Louisiana Family as Daylight Saving Time Reminder Nears

BATON ROUGE – As clocks spring forward this weekend, a Thibodaux family is sharing their story as a powerful reminder of the importance of working smoke alarms.

On February 8, 2026, a smoke alarm helped save the lives of Otice Johnson, his wife Janice, and stepson Christopher. Around 6 a.m., Johnson was doing some cleaning in his home when the smoke alarm sounded. After searching for the source, he discovered flames in the sunroom and was able to extinguish the fire.

A short time later, the alarm sounded again. Johnson returned to the sunroom and noticed smoke coming from the ceiling. He immediately woke his family, and they safely escaped before the fire worsened.

“I’m a firm believer in smoke alarms,” Johnson said. “That smoke alarm saved my family’s life. If we weren’t aware of the fire, we could have died.”

DPS Principal Assistant, Chief Bryan J. Adams said stories like Johnson’s show the importance of working smoke alarms.

“We would much rather share stories like this that show how smoke alarms save lives than continue reporting tragedies in homes without them,” Adams said. “Last year, 85 Louisianans died in residential fires, and only two of those homes had working smoke alarms. Every home should have them.”

With daylight saving time beginning Sunday, March 8 at 2 a.m., Adams encourages residents to check the status of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms while changing their clocks.

Homeowners should also check the age of their devices. Smoke and CO alarms older than 10 years should be replaced. Many newer models feature sealed, 10-year batteries that do not require replacement, though the alarms should still be tested monthly.

Families are also encouraged to practice a home fire escape plan, including identifying two ways out of every room and choosing an outdoor meeting place.

For families who do not have smoke alarms and cannot afford them, the State Fire Marshal’s Operation Save-A-Life program partners with local fire departments to provide and install alarms free of charge. Residents can learn more or request assistance by visiting lasfm.org or contacting their local fire department.

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