



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Working Smoke Alarms Save Seven in West Monroe Fire Ahead of Time Change

BATON ROUGE, LA- Newly installed smoke alarms saved a family of seven after a fire broke out in their West Monroe rental home.

The fire started around 1 a.m. on Friday, September 4, 2026. The alarms woke a 15-year-old girl, who alerted her mother, Brittany Uzzle, and the rest of the household, allowing everyone to escape.

"If we did not have smoke alarms, we would all be gone," said Uzzle. "They are a must-have. Smoke alarms are the most important things you have in your home. That's the only reason we are here."

State Fire Marshal (SFM) Chief Chad P. Sonnier is using the family's survival to urge residents to test their alarms this weekend as clocks "fall back" one hour for the end of Daylight Saving Time on Sunday, November 1, at 2 a.m.

Residential fires have killed 55 Louisianans so far this year. Only four of those fatal fires occurred in homes with working smoke alarms.

"We would much rather share stories like Brittany Uzzle's that prove working smoke alarms save lives than stories of lives lost," Sonnier said. "Now is the perfect time to make sure those devices are working."

The SFM is recommending these safety steps during the time change:

- Check the age: Replace any smoke or carbon monoxide (CO) alarms older than 10 years.
- Upgrade devices: Switch to newer models with 10-year sealed batteries to eliminate routine battery changes.
- Test monthly: Press the "test" button on all alarms once a month.
- Practice an escape plan: Ensure your family knows two ways out of every room and has an outdoor meeting place.

If you do not have a smoke alarm, and cannot afford one, our Operation Save-A-Life program can help. The program partners our agency with local fire departments to install smoke alarms for free for families that need them most. To learn more about the program and register for a smoke alarm, visit lasfm.org. You can also contact your local fire department to request a smoke alarm and installation.

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