



News Release

Office of the Louisiana State Fire Marshal
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RELEASE NUMBER: 77829
DATE: December 4, 2010

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Bogalusa Fire Claims One Life and Critically Injuries Another

Baton Rouge LA State Fire Marshal H. "Butch" Browning announced this morning that a tragic fire in Bogalusa claimed the life of an elderly woman, critically injuring a family friend and one person did escape. This marked one of the first fire deaths of the winter season in Louisiana.

The Bogalusa Fire Department received a report at 04:37am of a home on fire at 118 Claiborne Street. When fire crews arrived three minutes later, they found a single family residence on fire with a male and female located in the front yard. The male was severely burned as the result of attempting to rescue an elderly female who was still inside the home. The other female was uninjured. Firefighters entered the burning building and found the body of Judy Carter (dob. 11-7-47) she was pronounced dead at the scene. The injured man was taken to the Baton Rouge General Burn Unit where he is listed in critical condition.

The State Fire Marshal was called to investigate this tragic event. The cause of this fire is due to combustibles being placed too close to a heat source. The home heating system was inoperable and the electric stovetop was being used to heat the home. A curtain hanging from the window above the stove was ignited and caused the inferno. It is believed that Mrs. Carter was in her bedroom when the fire started. The Washington Parish Coroner will be conducting an autopsy. At this time the preliminary cause of this fire is accidental. There were no working smoke alarms in the home. State Fire Marshal Browning stated, "This is one of the first deaths and serious injuries of the winter months, you must take action now, ensure you have working smoke alarms and have safe heating equipment, your family's life depends on it."

The Fire Marshal offers the following immediate safety precautions:

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions. Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed. Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.

- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms monthly.

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