



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Space Heater Suspected in Fatal Gretna Fire

Gretna, LA – State Fire Marshal investigators believe that a space heater placed too close to a bed was the cause of a fire in Gretna early Tuesday that claimed the life of one of the tenants of a three-unit residential dwelling.

Just after midnight, investigators were called to the scene of the fire at 1019 Washington Avenue by Jefferson Parish fire officials after crews discovered the lifeless body of a man on the floor of the burned-out unit.

The victim was later identified as 61-year-old Calvin Williams, the sole occupant of the unit where investigators say the fire originated. At the time that the fire broke out, the remaining two units were also occupied, but those tenants were able to escape the blaze unharmed.

After being examined by investigators, Williams' body, which suffered significant thermal injury, was released to the Jefferson Parish Coroner for autopsy. Preliminary findings suggest that Williams died as a result of smoke inhalation.

After combing through the charred remains of the structure, investigators determined that the fire originated in the bedroom where Williams' body was found. Among the fire debris in that room, investigators found the remains of an electric space heater, in proximity to Williams' bed.

Investigators believe that the placement of the heater near combustible bedding is what ignited the fire which claimed Williams' life. No working smoke alarms were found in the residence.

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