



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections • Public Safety Services

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[www.lasfm.org](http://www.lasfm.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Chilly Temperatures Pose Increased Risk of Fire

**Baton Rouge, LA** - While this is the time of year when Louisianans begin to receive a much-welcomed reprieve from the steamy, suffocating heat and humidity of summer, cooler temperatures also bring an increased risk of fires from improperly managed heating sources.

“As a state that has its share of prolonged warm weather,” says State Fire Marshal H. “Butch” Browning, Jr., “cooler temperatures have finally arrived, meaning that many will begin using heating devices, such as space heaters, which inherently leads to a greater chance of fires.”

To support this claim, Browning said that from last Friday to Monday morning, fire departments across the state experienced an increase in the number of fires where heating devices are suspected as the cause. “Our investigators alone were called to investigate more than a dozen fires this past weekend,” Browning added.

In fact, the National Fire Protection Association reports that from 2009 – 2013, heating equipment, which includes both electric and gas-fueled spaced heaters, accounted for 16% of all home fires in the United States. Worse, space heaters were the cause of 84% of the deaths that occurred in those fires.

Poorly maintained or managed fireplaces and chimneys were a close second to space heaters in home fires and civilian deaths.

In order to enjoy the changes in temperature and to stay warm this winter without the worry of fires, the State Fire Marshal’s Office recommends observance of the following guidelines:

- Do not place anything flammable, such as furniture, bedding, and paper products within three (3) feet of any heating source, such as space heaters, ovens, stoves, or fireplaces.
- Do not use ovens to warm your house.
- When using an electric space heater, do not connect the heater to an extension cord or to a power strip shared with other electronic devices.

- If using a gas-powered space heater or fireplace, make sure that carbon monoxide detectors are installed in strategic locations in the home or business.
- Always turn space heaters off when leaving the room. Never leave heaters or fireplaces unattended.
- Before using a fireplace, the chimney should be inspected by a qualified professional.
- Place a spark-resistant screen in front of a fireplace when in use.
- Keep children and pets away from all heating sources.

For more safety tips on heating equipment, please visit the website of the National Fire Protection Association at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org), or the United States Fire Administration website at [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov).

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