



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections • Public Safety Services

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Home Fire: Will Your Pets Survive?

**Baton Rouge, LA** – The fact that thousands of Louisiana households harbor furry, four-footed companions, better known as “pets,” that are as beloved as any other member of the family, and that Louisiana has one of the highest fire death rates among pets in the country, has led the State Fire Marshal’s Office to support the annual “National Pet Fire Safety Day,” July 15th.

This special day of recognition was kicked off in 2009 by the American Kennel Club, in conjunction with ADT Security Services, for the purpose of educating pet owners as to the hazards posed to their animals in the event of a fire. The awareness campaign has steadily grown in popularity throughout the United States, where over 40,000 pets die each year in house fires and where more than 1,000 house fires are caused by animals left unattended in the home.

In addition to recognizing the importance of National Pet Fire Safety Day, the State Fire Marshal’s Office will launch an initiative intended to further highlight the importance of home fire safety planning as it relates to pets.

In the coming months, the agency will meet with advocacy groups and fire safety industry leaders to address fire-related pet deaths and injuries with the goal of establishing a “best practices” approach for owners to help ensure their pets’ safety.

This issue is very serious because, while hard figures are not available, it is estimated that in Louisiana over 3,000 pets are injured or die in fires annually. Nationally, 500,000 pets are adversely affected by residential fires each year.

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**NEWS RELEASE – ADDENDUM**

**National Pet Fire Safety Day – July 15, 2017**

The State Fire Marshal's Office joins the American Kennel Club, ADT Security Services, and the National Fire Protection Association in recommending the following guidelines to help protect your pets:

- Because most residential fires started each year by pets begin on kitchen stoves, control knobs should be removed prior to leaving the home to prevent animals from bumping into or brushing against the knobs, accidentally turning them on.
- Likewise, electric or gas heaters should be placed in locations inaccessible to pets or they should be surrounded by a fire-rated screen or barrier to prevent pets from bumping into and toppling heaters.
- Instead of using candles in your home consider purchasing battery-powered “flameless” candles.
- Inspect electrical cords periodically for signs of damage, such as chew marks. If damaged, replace them to prevent the possibility of electrical shorting or overheating.
- Include pets in all family fire evacuation plans. Train them to come to you when called and practice evacuating the home with them in hand or at your side.
- In your plan, identify those places where your pets like to hide in order to quickly locate them and reduce the amount of time it takes to evacuate safely. However, never delay your escape or endanger yourself or family in order to rescue a pet from a burning structure.
- Maintain a “post fire” supply kit for pets to include food, water, and medication.
- When leaving the home, keep pets in areas or rooms where firefighters can easily find them.
- Place a brightly-colored window “cling” on doors or windows where pets are being kept to alert firefighters as to where they are located.
- Install and/or maintain smoke alarms by checking batteries monthly.
- Consider installing a monitored fire alarm system that can alert fire crews quickly.
- For outside pets, make sure that the place where they stay is free from trash or other flammables and is a safe distance from the main house.