



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections • Public Safety Services
8181 Independence Blvd. • Baton Rouge, LA 70806

www.lasfm.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Ashley Rodrigue
Public Affairs Director

DATE: 7/16/21

PHONE: 225-620-5115
ashley.rodrigue@la.gov

State Fire Marshal Encourages Increased Fire Safety Awareness as Statewide Fatal Fire Count Remains Elevated

BATON ROUGE- The State Fire Marshal's Office (SFM) is calling on all Louisiana citizens to increase fire safety awareness and fire escape planning in and around their homes as the number of fire deaths across the state remain higher than in previous years.

"At the start of the year, we were seeing a concerning trend with fire fatalities, though just one loss of life is always one too many," said State Fire Marshal H. "Butch" Browning, "After a call to action to the public, those tragedies, thankfully, became less frequent. But now that we've hit the midway point of the year, I want to renew that call to action in hopes of preventing a continued elevated count of fire deaths in the latter part of the year."

So far in 2021, 38 lives have been lost to fire compared to 34 at this time last year. The causes of this year's fatal fires have been across the board from unattended cooking and unsafe smoking practices to various electrical issues stemming from improper electrical wiring. Though the number of fire deaths is up slightly, the number of requests to the SFM to conduct fire investigations is down, as is the number of fires determined to be intentionally set

"The first line of defense against fire is prevention," said Browning, "Prevention starts with awareness. I'm asking all Louisiana families to be aware of the fire hazards currently in your home and address them sooner rather than later. I'm also hoping the fire safety tips we have to offer help families keep fire hazards from developing in their homes."

The top cooking safety tips we'd like to share include staying in the kitchen when you are cooking anything on the stove and avoiding cooking when you're tired or impaired. In addition, make sure your cooking space is free of clutter and combustible materials. Lastly, ensure children are at least three feet away from an active stove, sharp objects and hot foods and/or liquids. Keep a lid close by in the event a small, stovetop fire occurs that can be smothered by placing the lid over it and turning off the heat. But if a large cooking fire occurs, get yourself and any other occupants out of the home immediately and call 911 for help.

On the topic of smoking, it's always best to smoke outdoors. Ensure all smoking materials are properly extinguished in the appropriate manner and keep all spark-producing objects, like lighters, out of the reach of children. Also, refrain from smoking when tired or under the influence of alcohol or medications that make you drowsy.

When it comes to electrical safety, avoid connecting extension cords and power strips to create power sources where a wall outlet does not exist and don't overload those cords and strips if using them for temporary purposes. Plug all appliances directly into wall outlets to prevent overheating of wires. And if your home is experiencing electrical issues, have a licensed electrician evaluate the situation and make any needed repairs.

Many of these cases involved homes with no working smoke alarms or sprinkler systems. Smoke alarms are a proven tool to alert residents to a fire danger in order to escape safely while home fire sprinklers can immediately limit the threat to life and damage to property.

The SFM's Operation Save-A-Life partners with local fire departments to install smoke alarms for free for families that need them most. To learn more about Operation Save-A-Life, or to register for a smoke alarm installation, visit lasfm.org

--END - END - END - END--

EST.
1904