



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two Children Die in Opelousas House Fire

ST. LANDRY PARISH- State Fire Marshal (SFM) deputies continue investigating the circumstances surrounding a house fire in Opelousas that claimed the life of two children.

Just before 1:15 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 5, the Opelousas Fire Department responded to a fire call at a house located in the 1900 block of Jake Drive. First responders arrived to find four of the home's six occupants outside, one of which was an adult male attempting to rescue two boys who were still inside. Firefighters later located a 12-year-old in a hallway and an 11-year-old in the living room by the front door.

Official identifications and causes of death are pending with the St. Landry Parish Coroner's Office.

Following an assessment of the scene, deputies determined the fire began in the living room. While an exact cause remains undetermined at this time, deputies cannot yet rule out an electrical malfunction of several objects located in the area of origin including a powered couch, space heater and a full, multi-plug power strip.

At this time, deputies have been unable to locate or determine whether the home had any working smoke alarms.

"This is an incredibly sad case that we wish had a very different outcome," said State Fire Marshal H. "Butch" Browning, "We encourage all families to take at least two things from this tragedy. The first is to get a smoke alarm for your home. The second is to have a practiced escape plan for your family, especially if you have children. Everyone should know two ways out of every room in your home and have a safe meeting place outside of the home to gather at to confirm everyone is out and unharmed."

When it comes to electrical safety, avoid connecting extension cords and power strips to create power sources where a wall outlet does not exist. Also, avoid overloading those cords and strips by using them for temporary purposes only, not utilizing every plug on them at the same time and by making yourself aware of their wattage capacities. Plug all appliances, especially ones that require a lot of power, directly into wall outlets to prevent overheating of wires.

Lastly, smoke alarms are a proven tool to alert residents to a fire danger in order to escape safely. 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.

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