



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sarepta Boy Dies in Heating-Related Fire

WEBSTER PARISH- State Fire Marshal (SFM) deputies have determined a fire in Sarepta that claimed the life of a child was caused by a space heater placed too close to combustible objects.

At 1:30 a.m. on Monday, January 30, the Sarepta Fire Department responded to a report of a mobile home fire located in the 700 block of Church Street. While two adults and two toddlers were able to escape and get treated for minor smoke inhalation, unfortunately, an 8-year-old boy was unable to be rescued.

During the investigation into what caused the fire, SFM deputies learned the family was asleep when the adults woke up to the smell of smoke. The two adults and toddlers were able to escape from their side of the mobile home, but they were unable to get to the 8-year-old who was sleeping on the other side of the home.

After an assessment of the scene and collecting witness statements, SFM deputies determined the fire began in the bedroom where the victim was sleeping. The investigation confirmed the fire was caused by a space heater left running too close to bedding.

“This is the second space heater-related fire death from the past few days and both losses of life are of vulnerable individuals,” said State Fire Marshal Dan Wallis, “We not only have to educate ourselves about safe home heating practices, but we need to be sure every member of our household knows how to stay warm safely and understands why it’s important to follow safe home heating tips.”

Those tips are:

- Place space heaters 3-5 feet from combustible objects like blankets and curtains
- Plug all heating appliances directly into wall outlets, not power strips or extension cords
- Do not use stoves, ovens, or grills to heat homes
- Don’t overfill fireplaces/wood-burning stoves
- Do not leave candles/open flames (or space heaters) left unattended

In addition, deputies were unable to confirm the presence of working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are proven to be the difference between life and death in a fire emergency. 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 the program and register for a smoke alarm, visit lasfm.org. You can also contact your local fire department to request a smoke alarm installation.

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