



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Ashley Rodrigue  
Public Affairs Director

**DATE:** 5/31/23

**PHONE:** 225-620-5115  
[ashley.rodrigue@la.gov](mailto:ashley.rodrigue@la.gov)

### Monroe Woman Dies in Duplex Fire

**OUACHITA PARISH-** State Fire Marshal (SFM) deputies have concluded their investigation into a duplex fire in Monroe that claimed the life of a disabled female resident.

Around 11 a.m. on Friday, May 26, the Ouachita Parish Fire Department responded to a report of a duplex fire located in the 200 block of Clayton Drive in Monroe. When firefighters arrived, they discovered one unit of the duplex engulfed in flames. Unfortunately, one victim was later found in a bedroom.

While official identification and cause of death are pending an autopsy by the Ouachita Parish Coroner's Office, the victim is believed to be the 64-year-old female resident of the home.

At this time, deputies have determined the fire began in the bed where the victim was recently confined during recovery from surgery. While an exact cause remains undetermined, deputies are unable to rule out the possibility that unsafe smoking practices could have been a contributing factor. Relatives report that the victim, who was on oxygen therapy, was a smoker and often smoked while in bed. Sadly, this was the second fatal fire in two days believed to be related to smoking while using medical oxygen.

The State Fire Marshal's Office advises people to never smoke, and never allow anyone to smoke, where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause materials to ignite more easily and make fires burn at a faster rate because oxygen is fuel to fire. In addition:

- Candles, matches, wood stoves and even sparking toys can be ignition sources and should not be used in a home where medical oxygen is utilized.
- Keep oxygen cylinders at least five feet from a heat source, open flames, or electrical devices.
- Body oil, hand lotion, and items containing oil and grease can easily ignite. Keep oil and grease away where oxygen is in use.
- Never use aerosol sprays containing combustible materials near the oxygen.

Lastly, deputies were unable to locate any working smoke alarms in this home. If you have smoke alarms, ensure they are working. If you need help getting smoke alarms for your home, Operations Save-A-Life can help. To learn

more about Operation Save-A-Life, or to register for a free smoke alarm, visit our website at [lasfm.org](http://lasfm.org) or contact your local fire department to request a free smoke alarm installation.

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