



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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[www.lasfm.org](http://www.lasfm.org)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### State Fire Marshal's Office Urges Residents to Practice Safe Home Heating

**BATON ROUGE-** As our state faces another blast of frigid air, this time forecasted to last longer than previous cold fronts, the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFM) is pleading with Louisianans to prioritize safe home heating practices.

"So far this year, we have lost ten lives, including two children, to home fires," said State Fire Marshal Chief H. "Butch" Browning. "Several of these cases are either confirmed or suspected to have been caused by home heating-related hazards that are absolutely preventable. Now is the time to take action to prevent the same dangers in your home."

The top safe-heating tips we are offering families include:

- 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 or ovens to heat homes
- Don't overfill fireplaces/wood burning stoves
- Do not leave candles/open flames (or space heaters) left unattended
- Have working smoke alarms in your home!

Having working smoke alarms in your home right now is especially important as cold weather is often associated with an uptick in residential fires.

Our Operation Save-A-Life program partners with local fire departments and districts to install smoke alarms for FREE, at any time of the year, for families in need of assistance accessing the critical emergency-alert equipment. Residents can register to have an alarm installed on our website, [lasfm.org](http://lasfm.org), or by contacting their local fire department.

In addition, carbon monoxide, or CO, can also be a hazard when it comes to heating your homes, especially if the power goes out. Carbon monoxide, often referred to as "the invisible killer," is an odorless, colorless gas created when fuels like gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil and methane are actively burning. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel, like furnaces, stoves, water heaters and fireplaces, can be sources of carbon monoxide, as can generators, both portable and home standby models.

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The top portable generator safety tips we are offering families include:

- Do not place generators inside of any structure including garages, carports, and sheds, regardless of doors remaining open
- Instead, place the generator at least 20 feet away from your home, and your neighbor's home, downwind away from open doors, windows, and vents
- Before refueling, turn the generator off and allow it to cool for 15-20 minutes
- Never try to power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet
- Instead, use a heavy-duty, outdoor extension cord to plug appliances into generators
- Have a fire extinguisher nearby
- Have a carbon monoxide monitor for your home!

If you are using a home standby generator for an extended period of time:

- Give the generator a break once or twice a day to allow for any exhaust build up around your home to clear
- Open windows and doors during those breaks to allow for any CO build up inside of your home to clear
- Ensure your generator is being properly maintained including the oil change frequency requirements
- Refer to your owner's manual or contact your dealer or unit's manufacturer if you have concerns or questions regarding proper installation or maintenance

If you don't already have a carbon monoxide alarm for your home, it is strongly advised to get one. Getting a combination carbon monoxide alarm and smoke alarm is even better.

In addition to having working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, the SFM also emphasizes the importance of having planned and practiced escape routes for your home that include knowing two ways out of every room.

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