

Fire Safety Article  
To: NEWSROOM  
For Immediate Release  
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### **Fire Safety Tips for the Winter**

Imagine going to bed and falling into a deep sleep only to be awakened by the piercing sound of a smoke alarm. Your home is on fire! The stench of thick black smoke fills the room and the intense heat increases by the second. Your instincts tell you to get out; however, your children are in the adjoining bedroom. What will you do next?

In reality, some people in our community have experienced this terrifying scenario. This year alone, fires have contributed to the death of seven people in our community. Without a smoke alarm, you are more likely to succumb to smoke inhalation.

Historically during the winter months, the Shreveport Fire Department (SFD) experiences an increase in fires ranging from electrical to cooking fires. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, nearly half of all residential fires in America involve cooking. Whether due to unattended cooking or faulty equipment, the result is the same – fires can be deadly! Consequently, the Shreveport Fire Department would like you to practice the following safety tips:

- Create and practice a home fire escape plan. Make sure escape routes are clear and windows that lead outside open easily.
- Test your smoke alarms regularly – at least once a month.
- If you are elderly or disabled, have a telephone near, in case you become trapped and are unable to escape. Call 9-1-1 and tell them where you are located.
- Stay in the kitchen while you cook.
- Have your fuel-burning appliances i.e. gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers, gas water heaters, gas space heaters, and fireplaces inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of every heating season.
- Keep a 3-foot zone clear around space heaters, water heaters, and fire places.
- Be aware the use of a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time, could cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Install at least one UL (Underwriters Laboratories) listed carbon monoxide alarm with an audible warning signal near sleeping areas and outside individual bedrooms.
- If your carbon monoxide alarm sounds and you are feeling drowsy or dizzy, leave the house and call 911. You may need medical attention for carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Never smoke in bed and make sure cigarettes are fully extinguished. Smoking materials are the leading cause of fire deaths.

Over the years, fire prevention and safety education has helped to reduce the number of fire-related deaths in Shreveport. The Shreveport Fire Department is committed to mitigating injuries and death in our community. By utilizing the above safety tips, you can provide a safe environment for you and your family. For more information on fire safety and other injury and/or fire prevention issues, contact the Shreveport Fire Department at 673-6740.