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**State Fire Marshal Urges: Stay Fire Safe During Extreme Cold**

Seven people have lost their lives in South Carolina this month due to fire. With extreme cold weather heading to the state, State Fire Marshal Shane Ray encourages everyone to protect themselves from the threat of unsafe fire conditions.

Please take the following steps:

**Prevent the Fire**

- Keep anything that can burn away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Keep kids and pets away from open fires and space heaters.
- Turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.

**Hear your Smoke Alarm**

- Check your smoke alarms and replace them if more than 10 years old.
- Call 911 as soon as you hear a smoke alarm beeping. Don't delay the fire department; seconds count in an emergency.

**Get Out! Stay Out!**

- Know two ways out of your home
- Don't walk into black smoke
- Fire is fast; close doors as you leave.
- Make sure your windows aren't painted shut, and close the door to the room if you have to exit the window.
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“Simple steps can be the difference between a close call and a tragedy,” Chief Ray said. “The forecast for severe weather alerts us that fire dangers will increase, and we hope to prevent additional fire deaths and injuries with this outreach to all South Carolina citizens and visitors. Also, please take a few minutes to check on loved ones and neighbors.”

“Two of the seven people who died this year were trying to rescue those inside,” Ray said. “We believe smoke alarms were either not present or operational at these tragic fire incidents.”

For more information about fire safety, visit [www.scfiremarshal.llronline.com](http://www.scfiremarshal.llronline.com). The State Fire Marshal's Office and the Fire Academy make up the Division of Fire and Life Safety, which is a division of the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.