



# INSURANCE AND SAFETY FIRE COMMISSIONER

- State of Georgia -

## *NEWS RELEASE*

**John F. King**

Commissioner of Insurance  
Safety Fire Commissioner  
Industrial Loan Commissioner  
Twitter: @GA\_DOI  
Facebook: @GeorgiaDOI  
Instagram: @GeorgiaDOI

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Contact: Brandon Wright  
Office: 404-463-0729

## STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE MID-YEAR UPDATE

**Atlanta** – In the first half of 2019, investigators with the State Fire Marshal's Office have responded to 215 fires. 30% (65) of those fires have been ruled arson. These numbers are down from 2018 where 217 investigations and 80 arson rulings had occurred midway through the year.

“I am pleased to announce that arson rulings by the State Fire Marshal's Office are down almost 20% through the first half of this year compared to the first half of last year,” said State Fire Marshal Jeff Hogan. “Residential fire fatalities are also down throughout Georgia.”

At the midway point of 2018, 49 residential fire deaths had occurred. All 49 of those deaths were in homes with no working smoke alarms. In the first half of 2019, 39 residential fire deaths occurred, 34 of which took place in homes with no working smoke alarms.

“Over the past 5 years, 91% of residential fire fatalities have occurred in homes with no working smoke alarms. It is essential that you have these alarms in your home and that you test them monthly. It is also very important that you practice an escape plan with your family in case an emergency were to occur,” said Safety Fire Commissioner John F. King.

For more information on smoke alarms and escape plans, please visit the Department's website at [www.oci.ga.gov/PublicEducation/SmokeAlarms.aspx](http://www.oci.ga.gov/PublicEducation/SmokeAlarms.aspx).

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### State of Georgia Fire Marshal's Office

As a direct result of the 1946 Winecoff Hotel fire in which 119 people lost their lives, the Georgia Safety Fire Law came into being. The General Assembly enacted legislation relating to fire safety in public buildings and assigned the responsibility for executing the law to the Commissioner of Insurance, who was named ex-officio Safety Fire Commissioner. The law further authorized the appointment of a State Fire Marshal and the creation of the State Fire Marshal's Office.

The responsibilities of the Fire Marshal's Office fall into five main categories: building inspection, manufactured housing inspection, engineering, hazardous materials inspections, and licensing.