



Office of Commissioner of Insurance and Safety Fire

Protect | Enforce | Educate | Inform

JOHN F. KING
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NEWS RELEASE

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FATAL FIRE IN WASHINGTON COUNTY RULED ACCIDENTAL

ATLANTA – Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John F. King announced today that an investigation into the death of one Washington County resident has been ruled accidental.

On December 3, 2023, a fire was reported at 470 Middle Hill Road near Warthen. The incident was reported just after 4:30 AM and the structure was found heavily involved with fire upon the arrival of emergency personnel. Investigators report that no smoke detectors were present in the apartment.

“Upon extinguishment, investigators from the State Fire Marshal’s Office found the remnants of several space heaters near the fire origin site,” said Commissioner King. “When the temperature drops each winter, we often see a corresponding increase in home heating equipment fires. If you plan to use heating equipment in your home, I urge you to practice a few simple precautions to protect your family and property.”

When using heating equipment this winter, please make sure to practice [these tips from the National Fire Protection Association](#):

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, including furnaces, fireplaces, wood stoves, and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Remember to turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- When selecting your space heater, choose one that has a thermostat control, overheat protection, and an auto-shut off feature in case it tips over.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary heating equipment, including water heaters or central heating equipment.
- **Never plug a space heater into an extension cord.**

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The mission of the Office Commissioner of Insurance and Safety Fire is to protect Georgia families by providing access to vital insurance products and safe buildings through fair regulation that creates economic opportunities for all Georgians.