



MIKE CHANEY
Commissioner of Insurance
State Fire Marshal

LEE HARRELL
Deputy Commissioner

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
Mississippi Insurance Department

1001 Woolfolk Building (39201)
Post Office Box 79
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0079
(601) 359-3569
www.doi.state.ms.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mike Chaney, Commissioner of Insurance/State Fire Marshal
Mississippi Insurance Department
Jackson, Mississippi
Monday, May 05, 2008
For additional information, please contact
Donna J. Cromeans, Public Relations Director 601-359-3569

Playing With Fire
Arson Awareness Week- May 4-10
Highlights Danger of Toy-like Lighters

Jackson –An innocent-looking yellow, rubber ducky that quacks can become dangerous and even deadly in a child’s hands when that ducky turns out to be a toy lighter. The number of injuries, deaths, and accidents caused by toy-like or novelty lighters has been growing across the country. Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney urges parents to be aware of these dangers and supports National Arson Awareness Week, May 4-10, 2008 and its theme “Toy-like Lighters-Playing with Fire.”

In 2002, the National Fire Protection Association estimated 13,900 child-playing structure fires were reported in the United States, with associated losses of 210 civilian deaths, 1,250 civilian injuries and \$339 million in direct damage.

“Mistaking lighters for toys has proved deadly. In September of 2007, two small Arkansas children died after setting fire to their apartment with a motorcycle-shaped lighter. Children are attracted to these lighters because they look like toys with visual effects, flashing lights, musical sounds, and toy-like designs. Everyone needs to be aware of the dangers posed by misuse of these innocent looking lighters,” said Commissioner Chaney.

Many of these lighters look like animals, miniature cars, mobile phones, cameras, fishing lures, coins, doll accessories, tools, and even fire trucks and fire extinguishers. Since 1996, the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission has recalled thousands of toy-like and novelty lighters due to their threat to public safety.

Some local and state governments are taking action by banning the sale of toy-like and novelty lighters and limiting their distribution. In March, 2008, Maine was the first state to pass a ban on

toy-like and novelty lighters. Tennessee also passed a ban in April, 2008. At least seven other states are considering bans. The Mississippi State Fire Marshal's office is considering similar action in Mississippi.

For more fire safety tips and information visit the State Fire Marshal Division of the Mississippi Insurance Department website at www.mid.state.ms.us.

###