



MISSISSIPPI STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MIKE CHANEY
State Fire Marshal

PRESS RELEASE

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State Fire Marshal Says Practice “12 Days of Christmas Fire Safety”

Jackson – A woman and her dog are safe today after being rescued from a fire by Gulfport firefighters last night. The cause of the fire was determined to be malfunctioning Christmas decorations. Citing this fire as illustration, Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney today encouraged all Mississippians to practice the State Fire Marshal’s Office “12 Days of Christmas Fire Safety.”

Starting Sunday, December 13, and for the next 12 days, the State Fire Marshal’s Office will highlight a Christmas Fire Safety tip on the Mississippi Insurance Department Twitter and Facebook pages. The tips focus on various areas that hold the potential for starting holiday fires. Areas covered include decorating, tree trimming and maintenance, entertaining and cooking.

“It is a goal of this campaign to make sure that no Mississippi family suffers the loss of a loved one to fire during the holidays. We want everyone to have a safe and Merry Christmas this year,” Chaney said.

The “Twelve Days of Christmas Fire Safety” are:

Day 1 - Use caution with holiday decorations. When possible, choose those made with flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.

Day 2 - Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings and replace damaged items before plugging lights in. Use lights that are approved by Underwriter’s Laboratories. Do not overload extension cords.

Day 3 – Keep children and pets away from light strings and electrical decorations.

Day 4 - Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

Day 5 - Never use lit candles to decorate a tree, and make sure any lit candles in the room are placed away from tree branches.

Day 6 - Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.

Day 7 - Try to keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily.

Day 8 - Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.

The State Fire Marshal's Office says a live tree can absorb as much as a quart of water a day. A moist tree is less of a fire hazard than a dry tree shedding needles. Use 1 quart of water for every inch of tree stem diameter.

Day 9 - Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S. When cooking for the holidays remember to keep an eye on the range.

Cooking fires are the one of the leading causes of house fires during the holidays.

Day 10 - When entertaining provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.

Day 11 -After a party, always check on, between and under upholstery and cushions for cigarette butts that may be smoldering.

Day 12 - Take the tree down when it becomes dry. Recycle it, use it as a fish shelter in a farm pond or put it out with the trash. Do not burn it in the fireplace. Heat may explode the wood and set the room on fire.

Should a fire break out in the home, have an emergency evacuation plan for the family to follow and have a designated meeting place for all family members. Once everyone is outside the burning home, call 911 and DO NOT RE-ENTER THE HOUSE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!!! (A chart for planning a family escape plan is available on the Mississippi State Fire Marshal webpage.)

For more fire safety information and tips visit the Be Prepared/Holiday Decorating section on the Mississippi Insurance Department website at www.mid.ms.gov. Find the Mississippi State Fire Marshal on Facebook and you can also follow the SFMO on Twitter at twitter.com/msfiresafe, for additional fire safety tips.