



MISSISSIPPI STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MIKE CHANEY
State Fire Marshal

PRESS RELEASE

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January Deadliest Month for Heating Fire Deaths in Mississippi

Jackson- January was the deadliest month for fire deaths in Mississippi in 2015. Of the eight fire deaths investigated by the State Fire Marshal's Office during January last year, six were heating related.

With temperatures dipping into the 20's tonight and more cold weather forecasted, Mississippians will be looking for ways to keep warm. Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney says using heating equipment as it is intended greatly cuts the risk of a fire in your home.

“Properly using heating sources to stay warm during cold weather and having working smoke alarms in your home is literally the difference between life and death,” is the message he has repeated over and over. It is a message that he will continue to repeat in order to protect lives in Mississippi

“Everyone must use extra precaution when using space heaters or alternative methods as heating sources. Space heating poses a much higher risk of fire, death and injury than central heating, and it cannot be stressed enough that using a stove to heat a home is extremely dangerous,” Chaney said.

He added that having a working smoke alarm in your home can cut your risk of dying in a home fire in half. A National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 2010 report shows home heating fires peak during 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., and associated deaths peak during 2:00 to 4:00 a.m.

The State Fire Marshal’s Office recommends the following heating fire safety tips:

- All heating equipment should be UL® approved and cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional prior to being used each year.
- Remember to keep clothes, drapes, and anything else combustible at least 3 feet away from all heating equipment, especially space heaters.
- Inspect the space heater’s power cord for damage, fraying or heat. If the cord inspection reveals any of these issues, the heater should be replaced. Proper cleaning is essential and should be done regularly.
- Never use space heaters while you sleep or in areas where children may be without adult supervision.
- Do not leave space heaters on when you are away from home.
- Always unplug space heaters when they are not in use. The heater should also be equipped with a tip over shut-off switch.
- Use only traditional heating equipment.
- Never use a stove or oven to heat living spaces. Kerosene is a poor choice for heating as it will give off poisonous fumes.
- Have chimney flues cleaned and inspected by qualified personnel.

- Have a spark screen that is age appropriate for all individuals using any area to be heated by a fireplace.
- Burn only approved materials in a fireplace or wood burning stove; never burn paper or trash in a fireplace or wood burning stove.
- 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!!!**

For more fire safety information and tips visit the Fire Marshal page of the Mississippi Insurance Department website at www.mid.ms.gov. You can also follow the Mississippi State Fire Marshal on Twitter at twitter.com/msfiresafe. Heating safety tips are also available on the MID YouTube page/FireSafety playlist at <http://www.youtube.com/user/msinsurancedept>.