



MISSISSIPPI STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MIKE CHANEY
State Fire Marshal

PRESS RELEASE

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“12 Days of Christmas Fire Safety”

Make for Safe Holiday

Jackson – It happens every year, a news story about a house fire caused by malfunctioning Christmas lights or decorations. 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” to help keep this holiday season safe.

Starting Tuesday, December 13, and for 12 consecutive 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.

“We want everyone to have a safe and Merry Christmas this year so Mississippi families avoid the loss of a loved one to fire during the holidays,” 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.

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.