

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## DON'T LET HO-HO-HO! TURN INTO OH NO, NO THIS CHRISTMAS

### *VIDEO SHOWS DANGER OF CHRISTMAS TREE FIRE*

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Fire safety is important year-round, but there are specific tips to keep in mind at Christmas to protect you and your family.

On Tuesday, December 3, 2019, officials with the State Fire Academy demonstrated how fast a Christmas tree fire can get out of control. Smoke quickly fills the room, temperatures rise, and the fire spreads to nearby flammable material. Video of the fire may be viewed and downloaded here:

<https://youtu.be/TmmCGOkGwI>

**In 2019, 57 people have died in fires in Mississippi. That's compared to 66 at this time last year. In 84% of the cases in 2019, there were no working smoke alarms.** A working smoke alarm cuts your risk of dying in a fire in half. If you need smoke alarms, ask your local fire department.

The State Fire Marshal Office, along with the Mississippi Insurance Department, recommends the following fire safety measures:

- Use holiday decorations made with flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.
- Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings and replace damaged items before plugging lights in.
- Use lights approved by Underwriter's Laboratories.
- Do not overload extension cords.
- Keep children and pets away from light strings and electrical decorations.
- Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- Never use lit candles to decorate a tree, and make sure any lit candles in the room are placed away from tree branches.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Try to keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source.
- When entertaining, provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.
- 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 a tree in the fireplace. Heat may explode the wood and set the room on fire.

- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the United States, so stand by your pan when cooking.
- Have an approved fire extinguisher handy.
- Remove pans from the stove when not in use.
- Turn handles in so pots cannot be pulled off the stove.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even for a short amount of time, turn off the stove.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

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