

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEATING EQUIPMENT TO BLAME FOR TEN FIRE DEATHS IN 2021

JACKSON, Miss. – Weather forecasts predict low temperatures in the 40s for the near future. As the temperature drops, many Mississippians will turn on central heat and plug in space heaters for the first time in months. They should check their heating equipment now to make sure it is safe to use.

There have been ten heating-related fire deaths so far in 2021. Of the 69 fire deaths statewide in 2020, eight were heating-related.

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

- Place working smoke alarms in every bedroom of your home.
 - Test smoke alarms once a month.
 - Replace smoke alarm units every 10 years.
- 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.
- 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 if using 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 don't go back inside the home under any circumstances.

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