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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jackson, Mississippi
Thursday, June 12, 2008
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State Fire Marshal Chaney Warns of Potential Explosive Fire Hazard

Jackson –People planning summer cookouts need to be aware of a dangerous and potentially explosive threat to public safety, State Fire Marshal and Insurance Commissioner Mike Chaney warned today.

According to information from the National Propane Gas Association, propane cylinders commonly used on gas barbecue grills are being used by persons in the manufacture of methamphetamines. These individuals are using the cylinders for the transport and storage of stolen anhydrous ammonia, a key element in the making of the drug. Cylinders used for this purpose have been found in many states, including Mississippi, at cylinder exchange and refilling locations as well as in hotel rooms and mobile laboratories.

“It is appalling that an all-American activity such as the weekend or holiday cookout must now be tainted by the criminal activity of some. Taking a moment to double check your propane cylinder before grilling will help to protect Mississippians from becoming victims of these criminals, and in some cases could even save lives,” Chaney said.

A blue-green stain on any brass portion of a service valve is evidence that it may have been in contact with anhydrous ammonia, which is a corrosive. The ammonia will deteriorate the brass valves and fittings located inside the cylinders, turning them into a potentially explosive hazard.

The pungent odor of ammonia on or near a cylinder is also an indication. If you suspect that a propane cylinder contains or has contained anhydrous ammonia, exercise extreme caution and restrict access to the area. Anhydrous ammonia can be extremely dangerous to human health.

It can also be dangerous to move a cylinder suspected of having contained anhydrous ammonia, due to the unknown integrity of the cylinder’s service valve. If you determine that it must be moved, keep in mind the hazards of valve expulsion. Immediately contact your Fire Department, Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Unit, or the nearest office of the United States

Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) for information on properly disposing of the cylinder. You may also call 1-800-728-2482, which is the contact number for an independent hazardous materials information resource.

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