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Don't Keep These Home Fires Burning National Fire Prevention Week (October 5-11) promotes "Preventing Home Fires"

JACKSON—A pot holder too close to a lit burner or a space heater left on overnight could be all it takes to start the home fires burning-literally. That's why Mike Chaney, Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal, the State Fire Marshal's office and the State Fire Academy are teaming up with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) from October 5-11 to urge Mississippians to "Prevent Home Fires" during Fire Prevention Week. Governor Haley Barbour has declared October 5-11 Fire Prevention Week in Mississippi.

Members of the State Fire Marshal's Office, their mascot Fireman Alex, a nine-foot fireman, and Sparky the Firedog from the State Fire Academy will be offering fire prevention and fire safety tips from a special display at the Mississippi State Fair which runs through October 12. Families can learn how to plan and practice escape routes from their home in case a fire occurs and also learn ways to prevent cooking, heating, and electrical fires. According to the NFPA cooking and heating fires are among the leading causes of home fires in the United States.

"Too many people in Mississippi are dying in fires in their homes. So many home fires are easily preventable and we will continue to work to help citizens take simple steps which can increase their safety from fire," said Mike Chaney, Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal.

"Whether it's smoking outside the home, keeping space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn, or staying in the kitchen when you are using the stovetop, there are easy things you can do to keep your home and family safe from fire."

According to the latest research from NFPA, in 2007, there were an estimated 399,000 reported home structure fires resulting in 2,865 civilian deaths and 13,600 civilian injuries and \$7.4 billion in direct damage in the United States. Home fires caused 84% of civilian deaths and 77% of injuries.

Do you know how to keep your home safe from fire hazards? Reviewing the following information and taking action can help you “Prevent Home Fires” during Fire Prevention Week and year-round.

- Cooking: Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period time, turn off the stove.
- Heating: Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Electrical: Replace cracked and damaged electrical cords; use extension cords for temporary wiring only. Consider having additional circuits or receptacles added by a qualified electrician.
- Smoking: If you smoke, smoke outside; wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays.

Fire Prevention Week is actively supported by fire departments across the country. For 85 years fire departments have observed Fire Prevention Week, making it the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

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