



For Immediate Release

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Put Safety First at Family Fourth of July Cookouts

JACKSON- Family and friends will soon be gathering for the annual Fourth of July cookout. Make this annual family tradition a memorable one this year by keeping the fire in the grill, under hot dogs and burgers, not flaring out of control to threaten your home or loved ones.

“The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) statistics say that nearly 19,000 people went to emergency rooms because of injuries involving grills in 2007. Perhaps the most dangerous time around a grill is when you’re lighting it. Take extra care with your grill this year as you and your family celebrate our country’s freedom on the Fourth,” Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said.

To help keep your family safe this Fourth of July, the Mississippi State Fire Marshal’s Office, recommends these grilling safety tips:

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.

Charcoal grills

- There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

Propane grills

Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, and there is no flame, turn off the gas tank and grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department. If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not move the grill.

In 2003-2006, the NFPA reports that United States fire departments responded to an average of 7,900 home fires involving grills, hibachis or barbecues per year, including an average of 2,900 structure fires and 5,000 outside fires. These 7,900 fires caused an annual average of 10 civilian deaths (to the nearest ten), 120 reported injuries and \$80 million in direct property damage.

For more fire safety tips visit the State Fire Marshal website at:

http://www.mid.state.ms.us/state_fire_marshall/state_fire_marshall_office.aspx.

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