



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Grill Fires Peak During Summer**

### **Chaney Urges Grilling Safety for Fourth of July**

JACKSON- In the past year, at least nine (9) Mississippians suffered burn injuries in fires involving a grill. Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney encourages everyone enjoying the Fourth of July with a family cookout to practice grilling safety.

“More grill fires and fire injuries occur during the summer months of June and July,” Chaney said.

“The most dangerous time around a grill is when you’re lighting it. Take extra care with your grill this year; celebrate the Fourth with your family, not in the emergency room.”

Nearly 19,000 people went to emergency rooms because of injuries involving grills in 2007. The National Fire Protection Association states that roughly one-third (1/3) of reported gas grill injuries were thermal burns incurred while lighting the grill. Gasoline or lighter fluid was a factor in roughly one-quarter (1/4) of reported charcoal or wood burning grill burns.

During the four-year period of 2003-2006, grills, hibachis or barbecues were involved in the ignition of an estimated 7,900 reported home, structure and outdoor fires per year. These fires caused an average of 10 civilian deaths, 120 civilian injuries, and \$80 million in direct property damage annually.

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.

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

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