



For Immediate Release

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Avoid Getting Burned on the Fourth

Chaney urges fireworks safety

JACKSON – Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney wants you to spend time with family and friends this Fourth of July, not paying a visit to your local emergency room being treated for burns caused by mishandling fireworks. In 2007, 9,800 fireworks-related injuries were treated in United States hospital emergency rooms.

“The tip of a sparkler can reach up to 1200° Farenheit in temperature and can cause third degree burns. Use common sense if you are handling fireworks and never give fireworks to small children,” Chaney said. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), two of five fireworks injury victims in 2007 were under the age of 15. The highest rates of injuries per million population were for children ages 5 to 9 and 10-14. Males accounted for three-fourths (70%) of fireworks injuries.

Due to the extreme heat and dry, near drought conditions in the state, Chaney is also urging extra care and caution with fireworks this year.

“With everything being as dry as it is, just the slightest errant spark can have disastrous results,” Chaney said. There were 193 fires determined to have been caused by fireworks in Mississippi in 2008.

For those who choose to use consumer fireworks, please remember and practice these fireworks safety tips:

- Observe local laws. Those wishing to purchase and use fireworks should first check with their local county and/or fire protection officials to determine that local laws are being followed.

Some municipalities prohibit fireworks from being used within city limits. Additional zoning regulations prohibiting the use of fireworks may apply in non-municipal areas. If you are unsure whether it is legal to use fireworks in your area, first check with local officials.

- Use common sense and always read and follow the directions on each firework.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Buy from reliable fireworks sellers. Store them in a cool, dry place.
- Always have an adult present when shooting fireworks.
- Put used fireworks in a bucket of water and have a hose ready.
- Only use fireworks outdoors, away from homes, dry grass, and trees.
- Light only one item at a time and keep a safe distance.
- Never experiment or attempt to make your own fireworks.
- Never re-ignite malfunctioning fireworks.
- Never give fireworks to small children.
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket.
- Never shoot fireworks in metal or glass containers.

There will be many professional fireworks displays, open to the public throughout the state on the Fourth. Attending one of those and leaving fireworks in the hands of professionals is the safest way to celebrate the Fourth of July, the National Fire Prevention Association believes.

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