



For Immediate Release
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**Deadline Looms for Adherence to
Fire Standard Compliant Cigarette Law**

JACKSON — After July 1, Mississippi smokers will find something a little different when they light up their next cigarette. On that date, all cigarettes sold in Mississippi must meet Fire Standard Compliant (FSC) requirements as outlined in legislation passed by the Mississippi Legislature in 2009.

All packs of cigarettes manufactured, distributed and sold in Mississippi after July 1 must bear an FSC stamp on or near the UPC code. Retailers are not required to remove inventory that is not FSC, provided that inventory bears the proper tax stamp and the wholesaler can establish and provide proof it was purchased before July 1.

Fire Standard Compliant cigarettes are designed to go out if they are not actively smoked. However, the commonly referred to term of “safe-cigarettes” is a misnomer, as the cigarettes can still cause a fire when dropped in flammable liquids, paper products, flower pots, or when other unsafe disposal practices are used.

“The bottom line in requiring these standards for cigarettes is to reduce the number of fire deaths in the state caused by such things as cigarettes dropped in bedding or upholstered furniture,” Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said.

“Legislation requiring the sale and manufacture of FSC cigarettes has been passed in all 50 states, illustrating the seriousness of the need for cigarette fire safety.”

Manufacturers must certify that all cigarettes they sell in the state meet fire standard compliant requirements. On-line certification will be available on the State Fire Marshal website and will include a fee of \$1,000 per brand family. Funds collected through this certification process will go into the newly created Cigarette Fire Safety Standard and Firefighter Protection Fund. These funds will be used by the State Fire Marshal’s Office to defray costs and for fire safety and fire education and prevention programs. The fund has already received nearly \$50,000 from tobacco companies in compliance with the new law.

Failure to comply with the law can result in the following fines:

Manufacturers and wholesalers: Up to \$100 per pack up to \$100,000 during any 30 day period.

Retailers: Up to \$100 per pack, not to exceed \$25,000 during any 30 day period.

While, primary enforcement of new law rests with the inspectors of the Mississippi Tax Commission, Mississippi State Fire Marshals, local law enforcement or code enforcement authorities are also authorized to inspect packages.

For more information on manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer requirements and on-line certification go to the State Fire Marshal page of the Mississippi Insurance Department website at www.mid.state.ms.us.

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