



For Immediate Release

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Children, Teens Most at Risk of Injury from Misuse of Fireworks

Chaney urges fireworks safety

JACKSON – Mississippians celebrating the Fourth of July with fireworks should take extra care when children and teens are present. Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney warns that the greatest risk for injury involving the misuse of fireworks is for children 5-9 and teens 15-19. A new report from the National Fire Protection Association states that these age groups are 2 ½ times more at risk than the general population. More fires are reported in the United States (U.S.) on Independence Day, than any other day.

“Sparklers, which can reach up to 1200 ° Fahrenheit, fountains and novelties alone, accounted for 32% of emergency room fireworks injuries in 2008. Use common sense if you are handling fireworks and never give fireworks to small children,” Chaney said.

The NFPA report also states that in 2008, fireworks caused an estimated 22,500 reported fires resulting in \$42 million in direct property damage. An estimated 7,000 people were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for fireworks related injuries. Males accounted for sixty-two percent (62%) of fireworks injuries in 2008.

Dry conditions and the extreme temperatures also add to the danger the misuse of fireworks pose in Mississippi. Should you choose to use fireworks; Chaney urges extra care and caution this year.

“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, the Mississippi State Fire Marshal suggests you follow these 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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