



For Immediate Release

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Protect Your Home and Family Before, During and After the Holidays

Jackson MS – As family and friends gather to celebrate the season Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney encourages all Mississippians to take the time to contemplate potential fire hazards, home mishaps and understand how your insurance might apply.

He suggests the following safety tips to protect your home and family before, during and after the holidays.

BEFORE:

When shopping, protect yourself from identity and credit card theft. Practice fire safety with your family decorations. Also make sure your homeowners' policies cover you in the event a visiting relative or guest is injured or falls ill.

DURING:

Cooking fires are still the leading cause of home fires across the nation.

“As much as unexpected guests are sometimes a part of the holidays, you don't want the fire department arriving because your feast is going up in flames,” said Chaney.

“When cooking this year's holiday meal, the Mississippi State Fire Marshal's Office reminds you to Stand By Your Pan, keep a kid free zone around the cooking area, and keep anything that can catch fire—pot holders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels or curtains—away from your stove top.”

If you are frying a turkey for the family dinner remember these specific safety tips:

- Keep your fryer outdoors, away from buildings and other flammable materials

- Never use a turkey fryer on wooden decks or in garages
- Make sure fryers are used on a flat surface
- Never leave a fryer unattended
- Do not overfill the fryer
- Make sure the turkey is completely thawed and be careful with marinades.
- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher nearby.

AFTER:

Take the tree down when it becomes dry. Recycle it, use it as a fish shelter in a farm pond or put it out with the trash. Do not burn it in the fireplace. Heat may explode the wood and set the room on fire.

Update your home inventory.

- Don't forget to add expensive Christmas gifts such as new TV's, cameras, electronic equipment, jewelry, or art to your home inventory. Make sure you have documentation of these items and notify your agent if you think additional coverage may be required. A home inventory checklist can be found on the MID website at (<http://www.mid.state.ms.us/publish/HomeInventoryChecklist.pdf>)
- Don't forget to add new furniture you may have purchased during the year.
- Keep a copy of your checklist offsite (a location away from your home) or give a duplicate copy to a trusted friend or attorney. Don't forget to update any duplicate copies.

For more fire safety information and tips for the upcoming holiday season, visit the special "Holiday Fire Safety" web page on the Mississippi Insurance Department website at www.mid.state.ms.us. (Look for the link in the notifications tab) You can also find the Mississippi State Fire Marshal's Office on Facebook and follow them on Twitter at twitter.com/msfiresafe.