



For Immediate Release

May 27, 2011

Practice Grilling Safety to Keep Memorial Day Celebration from Going up in Flames

JACKSON- Families gathering for Memorial Day celebrations and cook-outs are reminded to practice grilling safety as they fire up the grill for the first time to keep the celebration from going up in flames. Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney wants all Mississippians to remember, the only fire you want to see this holiday weekend is the one IN the grill.

“Improper or careless use of a grill, of any type, can threaten your home, your friends, and your family,” Chaney said

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) statistics state that from 2004-2008, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 7,700 home fires involving grills, hibachis or barbecues per year, including an average of 3,200 structure fires and 4,500 outside fires. These 7,700 fires caused annual average of 13 civilian deaths, 120 reported injuries and \$70 million in direct property damage.

“The most dangerous time in using any grill is when you ignite it. Take care before you light your grill, particularly if this is the first time you will be using it this season. The extra time you take in cleaning and preparing your grill can help you have a safer and happier cookout this Memorial Day,” Chaney said.

When celebrating the first family cookout of the year this Memorial Day weekend, 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.
- Do not use a grill under a carport or garage.
- 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. Do not use gasoline.
- 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 page of the Mississippi Insurance Department website at www.mid.state.ms.us. Consumers can get fire safety tips by following the State Fire Marshal's Office on Twitter @MSFireSafe or the Mississippi Insurance Department @MSInsuranceDept.

###