



For Immediate Release

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**Grilling Safety Key to Safe
Memorial Day Family Cookout**

JACKSON- Many Mississippians will be dusting off their grills for the first family cookout of the year this Memorial Day weekend. Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney today reminded grill-minded Mississippians that improper or careless use of a grill, of any type, can be a threat to your home, your friends, and your family and urges grilling fire safety this holiday weekend.

“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.

According to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) statistics, from 2006-2010 U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 8,600 home fires involving grills, hibachis or barbecues per year, including an average of 3,600 structure fires and 5,000 outside fires. These 8,600 fires cause an annual average of 10 civilian deaths, 140 reported civilian injuries, and \$75 million in direct property damage.

While 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.

More fire safety tips are available on the State Fire Marshal page of the MID website, www.mid.ms.gov, the State Fire Marshal Facebook page, and @MSInsuranceDept and @MSFireSafe on Twitter.

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