



For Immediate Release

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State Fire Marshal Urges Safe Start to Fourth of July Holiday With Grilling Safety

JACKSON-Mississippians looking to get an early start of the Fourth of July holiday with a cookout this weekend need to know and practice grilling fire safety before lighting the grill. Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney today reminds consumers that we are entering the peak month for grilling fires. More grilling fires occur during the month of July than any other month.

“The most dangerous time around a grill is when you light it. Also, you have a greater risk of a fire using a gas grill, with statistics showing gas grills were involved in an average of over 7,000 home fires annually between 2006-2010,” Chaney said.

As citizens celebrate our country’s freedom every Fourth of July, more lives and property are threatened by fire than any other day of the year. Between 2006 and 2010 fire departments across the country responded to an average 8,600 home fires involving grills, hibachis or barbeques per year. These fires caused an average of 10 civilian deaths, 140 reported civilian injuries, and \$75 million in direct property damage.

“Take extra care with your grill this year; you want to celebrate the Fourth with your family, not in the emergency room,” Chaney said.

Grilling injuries sent 16,600 patients to emergency rooms in 2011. The National Fire Protection Association states that roughly one-half (1/2) of reported gas grill injuries were thermal burns and almost one-third (1/3) of gas grill injuries were incurred while lighting the grill. Gasoline or lighter fluid was a factor in roughly one-quarter (1/4) of reported charcoal or wood burning grill

burns. More than one-quarter (28%) of the home structure fires involving grills started on a courtyard, terrace, or patio.

To help keep your family safe during this Fourth of July Holiday period, 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.
- 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.
- 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.ms.gov or get tips on Twitter from @msfiresafe and @MSInsuranceDept.

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