



For Immediate Release

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Children, Teens Most at Risk of Injury from Fireworks Misuse

Chaney urges Fourth of July fireworks safety

JACKSON – Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney urges all Mississippians choosing to celebrate this Fourth of July with fireworks to use extra care, and to be particularly mindful if children are present. Data from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) says that there are more fires in the United States on the Fourth of July than any other day of the year, and more than twice as many on any average day. Fireworks account for two out of five of those fires.

“Be sure to use common sense when handling any type of fireworks and be especially cautious where young children are concerned as statistics show children ages 5-9 and teens 15-19 are 2 ½ times more at risk for injury,” Chaney said.

Sparklers, often a favorite with children, can reach up to 1200 ° Fahrenheit, which is hot enough to cause third-degree burns. Other fireworks products such as fountains and novelties, according to the latest data, accounted for 34% of emergency room fireworks injuries. There were an estimated 9,600 fireworks related injuries reported in 2011 by U.S. hospitals with nearly one-quarter (26%) of victims being under age 15.

Fires started by fireworks can get out of control very quickly Chaney added. From June 29, 2012 through July 9, 2012 there were 56 fire incidents with fireworks as the heat source reported in

Mississippi. There were no reports of civilian or firefighter injuries or deaths due to fireworks in the state during that time period.

In 2011, nationally, fireworks caused an estimated 17,800 reported fires resulting in an estimated eight reported civilian deaths, 40 civilian injuries and \$32 million in direct property damage.

For those choosing 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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