



For Immediate Release

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State Fire Marshal Kicks Off Operation: SAM (Smoke Alarms Mississippi)

Jackson, MS –Today, Commissioner of Insurance/State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney and deputies from the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) kicked-off a new state-wide fire safety program, Operation: SAM (Smoke Alarms Mississippi) by distributing free smoke alarms at the Neshoba County Fair. In 2011, 15 cabins were destroyed in a massive fire at the campgrounds.

"There is no question that having a working smoke alarm in the home saves lives, it can cut your risk of dying in a fire in half," Chaney said.

Although, in 2012, the state recorded its lowest number of fire deaths recorded in a single year since the State Fire Marshal's Office has been keeping such records, 62 down from 80 fire deaths in 2011, the State Fire Marshal's Office is on a mission to prevent fire deaths in our state by implementing SAM – Smoke Alarms Mississippi.

Using funds made available through the Cigarette Fire Safety Standard and Firefighter Protection Fund [Miss. Code Ann. § 45-12-17], the SFMO has purchased 3,000 smoke alarms to be distributed throughout the state. The intent is for these smoke alarms to be installed in target homes throughout Mississippi.

Target homes include, but are not limited to:

- Residential homes;
- Manufactured/mobile homes;
- Homes of persons who may not be able to afford smoke alarms;
- Homes of the elderly;
- Homes with young children (under fourteen years of age);
- Homes of persons with disabilities; and,
- Homes that may be considered by the SFMO to be an exception based on the potential life-saving impact presented by the request.

Fire alarms will be distributed to target homes while supplies last. Priority for these alarms is given to those who cannot afford to purchase the device on their own. Furthermore, it is important to note that the goal of this program is not simply to hand out alarms, but to also encourage the proper installation of these alarms in homes while educating residents of fire safety measures.

Additional events to distribute the free smoke alarms will be announced soon.

The SFMO wants all Mississippians to have these vital devices in their homes. To learn more about the use of a smoke alarm in your home, or to request a fire alarm through SAM, please contact the SFMO at 1-888-648-0877 or 601-359-1061, or make a request through the State Fire Marshal page of the MID website at www.mid.ms.gov.

Fire safety tips and information are also available through the State Fire Marshal page on Facebook and on Twitter from @msfiresafe and @MSInsuranceDept.

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