



For Immediate Release
October 31, 2014

**Colder Weather Calls for
Heating Fire Safety**

Jackson – Using heating equipment as it is intended greatly cuts the risk of a fire in your home. With the arrival of this season’s first cold front, now is the time to make sure you are smart about heating safety when trying to stay warm says Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney.

“As the days get milder and the nights cooler, people, especially the elderly, who are more susceptible to the cold, are beginning to turn on and use space heaters,” Chaney said.

“Too many fires and fire deaths are caused by faulty heating equipment or people using ill-advised methods to stay warm. Take extreme care when choosing a heating source.”

He added that having a working smoke alarm in your home can cut your risk of dying in a home fire in half.

“Daylight Savings Time this weekend is the perfect time to check or change the batteries in your smoke alarms and make sure they are working properly,” Chaney said.

A 2010 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) report shows the leading factor contributing to ignition for home heating fire deaths was heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses, or bedding. Home heating fires peak during 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., and associated deaths peak during 2:00 to 4:00 a.m.

The State Fire Marshal's Office recommends the following heating fire safety tips:

- All heating equipment should be UL® approved and cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional prior to being used each year.
- Remember to keep clothes, drapes, and anything else combustible at least 3 feet away from all heating equipment, especially space heaters.
- Inspect the space heater's power cord for damage, fraying or heat. If the cord inspection reveals any of these issues, the heater should be replaced. Proper cleaning is essential and should be done regularly.
- Never use space heaters while you sleep or in areas where children may be without adult supervision.
 - Do not leave space heaters on when you are away from home.
 - Always unplug space heaters when they are not in use. The heater should also be equipped with a tip over shut-off switch.
 - Use only traditional heating equipment.
 - Never use a stove or oven to heat living spaces. Kerosene is a poor choice for heating as it will give off poisonous fumes.
 - Have chimney flues cleaned and inspected by qualified personnel.
 - Have a spark screen that is age appropriate for all individuals using any area to be heated by a fireplace.
 - Burn only approved materials in a fireplace or wood burning stove; never burn paper or trash in a fireplace or wood burning stove.
 - Should a fire break out in the home, have an emergency evacuation plan for the family to follow and have a designated meeting place for all family members. Once everyone is outside the burning home, call 911 and **DO NOT RE-ENTER THE HOUSE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!!!**

For more fire safety information and tips visit the Fire Marshal page of the Mississippi Insurance Department website at www.mid.ms.gov You can also follow the Mississippi State Fire Marshal on Twitter at twitter.com/msfiresafe. Heating safety tips are also available on the MID YouTube page/FireSafety playlist at <http://www.youtube.com/user/msinsurancedept>.