

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### STATE FIRE MARSHAL: FIRE RISK INCREASES WITH FREEZING WEATHER

**JACKSON, Miss.** – The Mississippi State Fire Marshal’s Office (SFMO) is investigating several heating-related fire deaths. At least one involved a chimney that caught fire. Others have involved space heaters.

“Many parts of the state will not get a break from this extreme cold, ice, and snow for a few more days,” State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said. “When heating your home, keep flammable objects like furniture, clothing, mattresses, or bedding away from heat sources like fireplaces and space heaters.”

Every home should have multiple smoke alarms. Smoke alarms should be placed outside of each bedroom. You should also install Carbon Monoxide alarms if you are using gas. If using a generator, make sure it’s outside and well ventilated. Carbon Monoxide is a deadly killer when generators are not used correctly.

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.
- Never use a stove or oven to heat living spaces. Kerosene is a poor choice for heating as it will give off poisonous fumes.
- Never use outdoor cooking equipment like grills for heating and do not bring propane bottles inside.
- Have chimney flues cleaned and inspected by qualified personnel.
- Have a spark screen that is age appropriate for all individuals if using 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, call 911 and don’t go back inside the home under any circumstances.

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