

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEATING EQUIPMENT TO BLAME FOR NINE FIRE DEATHS IN 2022

JACKSON, Miss. – There have been nine heating-related fire deaths so far in 2022, out of 52 fire deaths statewide. There were 84 fire deaths statewide in 2021. Fifteen of those were heating-related. As cooler temperatures return, you should check the safety of your heating equipment.

“Many Mississippians will soon turn on central heat or plug in space heaters for the first time in months,” said State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney. “Remember to keep clothes, drapes, and anything else combustible at least 3 feet away from all heating equipment, especially space heaters.”

The State Fire Marshal’s Office (SFMO) 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button. Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.
- Smoke alarms should be placed in every sleeping area and common hallways and on every level of the home.
- 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 don’t go back inside the home under any circumstances.

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