

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRE AND ICE: PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM SEVERE COLD WEATHER THREATS

JACKSON, Miss. – Severe cold weather poses a threat to your home and vehicle. Avoid an insurance claim by taking action now.

- Leave your faucet running with a slight drip and open the cabinet doors under your sinks.
- Look at the trees around your property and cut back branches or stems that are dead, dying, diseased, or broken.
- Clearing the debris from your gutters will help prevent ice dams by allowing meltwater to drain freely.
- Evaluate the insulation and ventilation (roof or soffit vents) in your attic, keeping the warm air in your home and out of your attic.
- Perform maintenance checks on your vehicle. Check the battery, antifreeze and wiper fluid levels. Fill up with gas, pack emergency supplies and keep a windshield scraper on-hand to remove ice.

As you heat your home, keep fire safety in mind.

- Keep clothes, drapes, and anything else combustible at least 3 feet away from all heating equipment, especially space heaters.
- Never leave space heaters on when you are away from home.
- Never plug space heaters into extension cords. Plug electric space heaters directly into an outlet.
- All heating equipment should be UL® approved.
- 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.
- Never use space heaters while you sleep or in areas where children may be without adult supervision.
- 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.
- If using a gas heater, install a carbon monoxide detector.
- 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.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows how to get out and where to meet outside.
- Once everyone is outside a burning home, call 911 and don't go back inside the home under any circumstances.

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