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Changing Seasons and Cooler Temps Could Mean Higher Fire Risk

JACKSON, Miss. – So far in 2026, there have been 65 fire deaths in Mississippi. There were no working smoke alarms in at least 40 of those cases. Compare that to the 75 residential fire deaths in 2025, when there were no working smoke alarms in 41 of the cases. That means that smoke alarms weren't working or weren't installed in 54 percent of the homes where fire deaths happened.

"Daylight saving time on Sunday morning is a good reminder to test smoke alarms and talk to your family about what to do if there is a fire. Make sure everyone knows how to escape a home fire, where to meet outside, and how to call for help. Never go back inside a burning building for any reason. These steps are what save lives," said State Fire Marshal and Insurance Commissioner Mike Chaney.

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

- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.
- Make sure everyone in the home understands the sound of the smoke alarm and knows how to respond.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.
- Replace the smoke alarm immediately if it doesn't respond properly when tested.
- Smoke alarms should be placed in every sleeping area and common hallways and on every level of the home.
    - Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
    - A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall.
    - Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet from the stove.
- Create an escape plan and make sure all family members know where to meet once out of the home.

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