

Fire Department issues wintertime advisory

The Biloxi Fire Department, which sees an increase in fire calls at the outset of winter each year, is reminding residents to take steps to minimize the risk of inadvertently igniting household fires.

The fire department's advice coincides with an announcement by the National Weather Service that freeze warnings are being issued as nighttime temperatures are beginning to dip below the 30s in Biloxi.

The fire department encourages residents to be prepared for the cooler weather.

"Misuse of electric space heaters is the No. 1 cause of residential fires in winter months," said Mark Dronet, a deputy fire chief who heads Biloxi's Fire Prevention Division.

"Space heaters need to be kept three feet away from all combustibles, and you should buy only those space heaters that are UL-approved and equipped with a safety switch that will automatically turn off the unit if it turns over.

"And, by all means, never leave a space heater unattended. Always turn them off, and, to be safe, unplug them when they're not in use."

Dronet said residents should avoid burning candles for warmth, but those who insist on using candles should also use a candle holder.

Among the other tips:

- All filters on heating units should be thoroughly cleaned before use.
- Gas-powered heating units should be serviced once a year by a certified technician, and homes using a gas-powered heater should be equipped with a carbon-monoxide detector.
- Fireplaces should be thoroughly cleaned by a chimney sweep before use, and residents should never burn pine in their fireplaces to avoid a build up of creosote in their chimney.

Read the rest of the fire department's wintertime fire safety advice on the city web site at biloxi.ms.us.

Are you in the loop?

The City of Biloxi has transmitted tens of thousands of e-mails with news about Hurricane Katrina or the ensuing relief and recovery efforts. In fact, the streams of news began flowing even before the storm made landfall Aug. 29. You can also receive Storm Recovery News e-mails directly from the city by clicking on "Are you in the loop?" on the front page of the city web site at biloxi.ms.us. Thousands of people – either local residents or interested citizens across the country – are keeping up with Biloxi's recovery efforts, either by visiting the city web site or the city e-mail campaign. Sign up today for this free service.

City of Biloxi Storm Recovery Information at a glance

As of Nov. 17, 2005

BILOXI STORM RECOVERY LINE: 228-435-6300, DAILY.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Curfew: None.

FEMA TEMPORARY DISASTER HOUSING

FEMA has developed several temporary housing options for individuals displaced by Hurricane Katrina:

- Travel Trailers (TT) and Mobile Homes (MH) are being brought in to provide temporary housing.
- To apply for a travel trailer or mobile home, register with FEMA by visiting the Donal Snyder Community Center, 2520 Pass Road or by calling FEMA at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).
- For problems with FEMA trailers, call 1-866-877-6075.

FEMA

FEMA has set up two Disaster Recovery Centers in Biloxi:

- Donal Snyder Community Center, 2520 Pass Road in west Biloxi.
- Biloxi Community Center, 591 Howard Ave. in east Biloxi.
- The centers are open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Residents may apply for financial assistance and temporary housing.
- The deadline for Mississippians to apply for financial assistance from FEMA is Jan. 11, 2006.
- Residents may check on the status of their FEMA request by calling 1-800-521-FEMA (3362).

SBA DISASTER LOANS

- Information and assistance about U.S. Small Business administration loan applications are available at the Donal Snyder Community Center.
- Information may also be found by calling SBA customer service at 1-800-659-2955 or 1-800-877-8339 for those who are hearing impaired. Residents may also visit the SBA's website at www.sba.gov/disaster.

SOCIAL SECURITY

- The Social Security office in Biloxi, which is at 946 Tommy Munro Drive, is now open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Residents may call the office at 228-388-1432 or through SBA's toll-free line at (800) 772-1213 or online at www.socialsecurity.gov.

PERMITS

- A permit is required when you or a licensed contractor make repairs or alterations to your property. The permit helps ensure that the work is in compliance with established building codes. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the city has waived the fee for permits for repairs to residential property.
- To obtain a permit, visit the Building Division of the Community Development Department, 676 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. You may call the Building Division at (228) 435-6270 or view a building permit application by clicking on Forms & Permits on the city web site at biloxi.ms.us.

U.S. SEN. TRENT LOTT

- Residents may visit Sen. Lott's representatives at the Dan M. Russell Federal Building, 2012 15th Street Suite 451, in Gulfport on Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Residents may also contact the office by calling 228-863-1988.

U.S. REP. GENE TAYLOR

- U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor has established two additional offices on the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The locations:
- 2900 Government St., Unit B in Ocean Springs Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., 228-872-7950.
 - Northwest corner parking lot of the Gulfport Courthouse at 24th Avenue and 19th Street on Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., 228-864-7670.



HEALTH

- Mississippi Department of Health's general information line is 1-866-458-4948.
- Mississippi Department of Health's Harrison County district office telephone number is 228-831-5151.

EDUCATION

- Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College has reopened all locations and all centers.
- The University of Southern Mississippi resumed fall classes Oct. 10. For more information call the university's toll free number, 1-866-320-3359 or 228-865-4500.
- Biloxi Public Schools resumed classes on Sept. 26. For more information, visit the schools website at www.biloxischools.net, or call the Biloxi public schools administration at 228-374-1810.

Animal Shelters

BILOXI/GULFPORT

- The Humane Society of South Mississippi, 13656 Washington Ave., Gulfport has reopened its adoption center. Residents may visit the Humane Society on Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call the office at 228-863-4394 or the shelter at 228-863-3354.
- For information regarding the placement of the animals that were taken to the animal shelter in Hattiesburg, call the National Humane Society at 1-800-HUMANE1.
- Financial donations are accepted through:
 - Mollie Hillburn at 228-596-9890
 - Hancock Bank, any branch by making a donation in the name of the HSSM Katrina Relief fund
 - Website, www.hssm.org.
 - Mail: HSSM, HSSM, 13756 Washington Ave., Gulfport, MS 39503

JACKSON COUNTY

- Jackson County Animal Shelter, 4400 Audubon Road in Ocean Springs has reopened its adoption center. Residents may visit the shelter Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information call 228-497-6350.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

- Residents may call the Red Cross at 1-800-975-7585.

FOOD STAMPS

- For information about the food stamp program, call 1-800-948-3050 or (601) 359-4429.
- Office locations:
 - 5343 Jefferson Street, Moss Point
 - 38 London Street, Lucedale
 - 417 Mississippi 11 North, Poplarville
 - 648 Fairgrounds Street, Wiggins

SALVATION ARMY

- Yankee Stadium, 281 Lee St.
- The site is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday for financial assistance. This site runs on a ticket system so be patient and follow the rules. Tickets are handed out on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday starting at 8 a.m.
- Meals are served seven days a week with the assistance of a local Baptist organization. Lunch is served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and dinner is served from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Thanksgiving dinner will be served on Thursday, November 24 at Yankee Stadium from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Dinner is free for the public. Volunteers needed for that day should report to the dome to provide help.
- Residents may call the Salvation Army at 1-800-SALARMY (725-2769).

HARRISON COUNTY VOLUNTEERS

- People interesting in volunteering or people who are need of volunteers may call 228-897-1358 or 228-897-1493.