

Why candles are a concern

In 2001, home candle fires killed 190 people and caused more than a quarter-million dollars in property damage in the U.S., according to the latest data from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Those data also show that candles started more reported home fires in 2001 than at any time since 1980, when data collection began.

Used safely, candles can fill our homes with fragrance and create a calming and welcome mood. They add glow to the holidays and are an important part of religious observances. But lit candles left unattended or burning while people sleep can easily start a devastating fire.

Like a lit cigarette or a pan on a stove, a burning candle without human supervision is a disaster waiting to happen. Awareness and caution can keep homes and families safe.



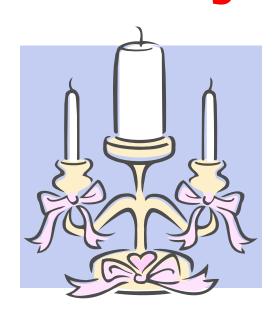
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Candle Safety



When you go out, blow out!



You can easily assure that candles are used safely in your home. If you enjoy candles in your home, follow this safety advice:

- Place candles on stable furniture, in sturdy holders that will catch dripping wax.
- Never, *never* leave a burning candle unattended.
- If the power goes out, use <u>flashlights</u> for illumination, not candles.
- Keep candles away from all materials and objects that can catch fire.
- Place candles on higher furniture, where they can't be reached by children or pets.
- Never place lit candles in windows; they can ignite blinds and curtains.
- Don't allow children or teens to use candles in their bedrooms.
- Ask questions about the candles and candle-holders you buy; major suppliers follow new standards to produce candles and candle-holders that won't

- break, tip over or otherwise malfunction in ordinary use.
- Extinguish candles carefully, using a long-handled candle snuffer or a soft, directed breath. Take care not to splatter wax.



Candles can lift our spirits, but they can easily result in disaster.

Why are the numbers of candle fires increasing? One reason is that the popularity of candles is soaring. Americans are spending \$2 billion on candles every year. Candles are now found in can seven out of 10 households across the country.

Prepare for the worst

Every family needs a home fire escape plan. Start by walking through your home and identifying two ways out of every room. Then draw out your escape plan. Put your escape plan to the test with a fire drill at least twice a year. Practice assures that everyone in your family will know what to do if a fire occurs.

Always choose the escape route that is safest, and practice crawling; you might have to go through smoke to get out.

Smoke is nasty stuff — even worse than fire, itself. To keep from breathing it, crawl low, under the smoke, on your hands and knees. Your head will be in a "safety zone" of clean air about kneehigh.

Our department joins forces with NFPA during Fire Prevention Week, 2nd week of October, to raise awareness of important causes of home fires and steps you can take to avoid them.

Candle safety is one of our top fire safety priorities, during Fire Prevention Week and all year long.

If you use candles in your home, "candle with care."