

Candle Safety

Remember that a candle is an open flame which can easily ignite any combustible.



Facts and figures:

- Candle fires accounted for an estimated 4% of all reported home fires in 2004.
- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of home candle fires started in the bedroom, resulting in 35% of the associated civilian deaths.
- Reported home candle fires in 2004 is roughly two-and-a half times that of the 6,800 low reported in 1990.
- December had almost twice the number of home candle fires of an average month.
- More than half (54%) of home candle fires occurred when some form of combustible material was left or came too close to the candle; The candle was unattended or abandoned in 20% of the incidents; Four percent were started by people (usually children) playing with candles.
- Falling asleep was a factor in 12% of home candle fires and 25% of the associated deaths.
- Christmas Day was the peak day of the year for home candle fires in 2000-2004. Christmas Eve ranked second and New Year's Day was third.

(NFPA's "Home Candle Fires" report by Marty Ahrens, November 2006)

Safety Tips:

- Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Keep candles at least 1 foot away from things that can catch on fire, like clothing, books and curtains.
- Use candle holders that are sturdy, won't tip over easily, are made from a material that cannot burn, and are large enough to collect dripping wax.
- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.
- Keep candle wicks trimmed to one-quarter inch and extinguish taper and pillar candles when they get to within two inches of the holder. Votives and containers should be extinguished before the last half-inch of wax starts to melt.
- During power outages, avoid carrying a lit candle. Use flashlights.
- NFPA discourages the use of candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.



Candles and Children:

- Keep candles up high out of reach of children.
- Never leave a child unattended in a room with a candle. A child should not sleep in a room with a lit candle.
- Don't allow children or teens to have candles in their bedrooms.
- Store candles, matches and lighters up high and out of children's sight and reach, preferably in locked cabinet.

During Power Outages:

- Try to avoid carrying a lit candle. Don't use a lit candle when searching for items in a confined space.
- Never use a candle for a light when checking pilot lights or fueling equipment such as kerosene heater or lantern. The flame may ignite the fumes.