

A Safe Home is a Happy Home

Everyone loves the warm glow of candlelight. For many, candles are a festive holiday tradition. For others, they're something to enjoy year-round. The National Candle Association, which tracks the industry, reports that candles are used in seven out of 10 households in this country.

That soothing, flickering light, however, can easily become the source of a deadly fire. As candles have grown in popularity, the number of fires caused by candles has tripled in the past decade. In 2001, the most recent year for which data is available, candles caused approximately 18,000 home fires in this country. Those fires were responsible for estimated property losses of \$265 million, 1450 injuries, and 190 deaths.

It's easy to forget that a candle is an open flame. Fire moves with ferocious speed. An entire home can be consumed in less than five minutes. Once the flame from a candle spreads, it can get out of control before the homeowner even knows what's happening. This is especially true if candles are left unattended. An adult should always be present in any room where a candle is burning. An unwatched candle is a tragedy waiting to happen.



Candles can be a pleasing way to add ambiance to your home. But if you want to keep yourself, your loved ones, and your property safe, candle safety should be a top priority. This pamphlet will get you started.

And don't forget other key fire safety rules. Many of the fatal fires caused by candles in the past decade occurred in homes where no smoke alarm was present. Maintaining smoke alarms is a small investment of money and time for something that can save your life and the lives of your family. Replace smoke alarm batteries at least twice a year, when you set your clocks forward and back. Test smoke alarms once a month, and replace them after 10 years.

Lastly, have a fire escape plan and practice it with your family. Hopefully you'll never need to use it. But if you do, it can mean the difference between life and death.

**An unwatched candle
is a tragedy
waiting to happen.**



ALWAYS REMEMBER:

- Never let children play with or near burning candles. Keep children and pets well-supervised when there are candles lit.
- For maximum safety, don't use candles in bedrooms.
- Keep burning candles at least a foot away from anything that might catch fire.
- Take extra precautions around the holidays. Keep candles far from decorations.
- Use flashlights or battery-operated lights during power outages if at all possible.

**And Most Important,
When You Go Out, Blow It Out.**

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USE CANDLES WITH CARE

When you go out...

**Blow
it out!**



When You Go Out, Blow It Out

This message can't be repeated often enough.

- Never leave a candle unattended.
- Always extinguish candles carefully, using a candle snuffer with a long handle, or by blowing gently to avoid splattering hot wax.
- Make sure wicks have stopped glowing before you leave the room.
- Never leave kids or pets alone in a room with a candle burning.

In the Bedroom

Candles can be romantic, but house fires are not. Over 40 percent of candle fires in homes start in bedrooms. Fires that began in the bedroom have been responsible for 24 percent of the deaths from candle fires. Mattresses and bed linens are most commonly the first things to ignite.

- Fire safety experts recommend making bedrooms a candle-free area of your home. If you decide to use candles in your bedroom, keep them well away from anything flammable.
- Make sure candles are fully extinguished before you fall asleep—or you may never wake up.
- Never light candles in a child's bedroom, and don't let teenagers light candles in their rooms. The safety of your whole household depends on it.

Steady Does It

- Make sure candles are in sturdy, flame-proof holders that won't tip over. Metal, glass, and ceramic are good choices.
- Candles should fit securely in holders.
- Make sure holders are big enough to collect any dripping wax.
- Place candles on an uncluttered surface, on a stable piece of furniture.
- Keep lighted candles at least a foot away from anything that can burn, including curtains, wallpaper, blinds, clothing, bedding, towels, upholstered furniture, cabinets, books, papers, Christmas trees and holiday decorations.
- Burn taper candles only to within 2 inches of their holders.
- Don't use votive and container candles after they've burned down to half an inch in height.
- Use caution when lighting candles. Keep hair and clothing well away from flames.
- Keep candles away from windows and doors. A draft can potentially tip candles over, or cause the flame to blow into a curtain or wall that seemed to be at a safe distance.
- Keep candle wicks trimmed to one-quarter of an inch to keep flames lower.
- Allow candles to cool completely before moving or handling them, trimming the wicks, re-lighting them, or replacing the lids on container candles.
- Don't leave used matches in candles.
- Avoid using candles that have flammable items, such as dried flowers, imbedded in them.



Keep Holidays Safe and Happy

Twice as many candle fires happen in December as compared to other months. More people use candles over the holidays, and there are also more flammable items, such as holiday decorations, that are likely to catch fire.

- Keep all decorations well away from burning candles.
- Water live Christmas trees regularly to prevent drying out.
- To be extra safe around Halloween, use flashlights in jack-o'-lanterns instead of candles.

Kids and Candles Don't Play Well Together

- Never leave children unsupervised in a room with a burning candle. That goes for pets, too.
- Even if there is an adult present, kids should not play where they might knock burning candles over.
- Keep candles high up, out of small children's reach.
- Absolutely never let kids play with candles or melted wax. Hot wax can cause serious burns.
- Keep all matches and lighters well out of children's sight and reach, preferably in a locked cabinet.

Stay Safe When the Power is Out

Candles used for light when electrical power is out due to a storm or nonpayment of bills have resulted in a significant number of fatal home candle fires.

- Use flashlights or battery-operated lights during power outages instead of candles.
- Keep plenty of flashlights and extra batteries for use in emergencies.
- If you must use candles, again, never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish all candles before leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Avoid carrying lighted candles.
- Never use a candle to look for something in a confined area.
- Never use candles for light when checking a pilot light in a gas stove, or putting fuel in kerosene lanterns or heaters. The flame may ignite the fumes. In general, keep candles far away from any flammable liquids.

