



# Shine a Light on Safety

A Factsheet on Candle Safety

Candles have become a popular decoration in our homes. The wide variety of colors shapes and scents have helped candle sales become a several billion dollar a year industry. Each year, candle misuse causes approximately 23,600 residential fires in the United States and results in \$390 million in damage.

## A Growing Concern

The growing number of candle fires are a concern for fire departments across the country. The number of home fires caused by candles has been soaring in recent years and jumped a startling 20 percent from 1998 to 1999 according to the National Fire Protection Association.

How does such a little flame become so dangerous? Misuse, Candle fire most commonly occur when the candles are left unattended or something that catches fire easily is left too close to the flame.

## Rules to Follow

Follow these basic rules to prevent a fire from starting in your home:

- Always keep burning candles within sight. Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or before going to sleep.
- Always use a candleholder specifically designed for candle use. the holder should be heat resistant, sturdy and large enough to contain any drips or melted wax.
- Place lighted candles where they won't be knocked over by children, pets or anyone else.
- Keep burning candles away from furniture drapes,

bedding, carpets, books, flammable decorations, etc.

- Read and carefully follow all manufacturer instructions. Do not burn a candle longer than the manufacturer recommends.
- Extinguish pillar and taper candles when they burn to within two inches of the holder. Discontinue burning votive and container candles before the last half inch of wax melts.

## Built-in Safety

Make sure your home has these safety features to help keep you safe.

### Smoke Alarms

All homes should be equipped with working smoke detectors. There should be at least one on every level of the home. Battery powered smoke detectors should be tested every month, and batteries changed at least once a year. If you live in an apartment, it is your responsibility to maintain your smoke detectors, while your landlord is responsible for providing working smoke detectors when you move in.

### Fire Extinguishers

Properly operated, fire extinguishers can help stop a small fire before it has a chance to grow out of control. Home fire extinguish-

ers can be purchased from a hardware or home improvement store.

### Evacuation Plan

Every family should develop and practice a home escape plan that includes every member of the household.

**Remember, even with these safety features, prevention is still the best strategy! Stop fires before they start.**

### For More Information

Contact:

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