

# Candle Safety

The Effingham Fire Department would like to remind the public this holiday season about candle safety. We know that decorative and fragranced candles may be an attractive addition to your home décor, but if used improperly, they can be a serious fire hazard. According to the National Fire Protection Association, residential fires caused by candles have more than doubled over the past decade.

According to a 2001 pilot study of candle fires by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), by far, most candle fires were caused by combustibles being too close to the candle. The next most common cause of candle fires was due to the candle falling over or being knocked over by wind, doors, children or pets.

## **Safety Tips**

- Keep candles a minimum of 1 foot, in all directions, from flammable and combustible items such as curtains or bedding. Make sure curtains cannot be blown over the candle by wind.
- Do not use candles on or near Christmas trees.
- Place candles on secure furniture and out of the reach of children and pets.
- Only burn candles while under constant adult supervision.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Trim wicks prior to each use to within  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch from the top of the candle.
- Extinguish the flame if it burns too close to the container side.
- Place burning candles away from drafts and vents.
- Do not allow candles to burn down to the bottom of their container. Stick candles should not be allowed to burn down below 2 inches from their holder.
- Extinguish all candles before leaving the room or when going to bed.
- Avoid burning candles for more than four hours at a time.
- Avoid walking while holding a burning candle. Do not move a glass container when the wax is liquid.
- Use a flashlight rather than a candle during power outages.
- Do not use a candle for light when fueling equipment such as a kerosene heater or lantern as the flame may ignite the fuel vapors.
- Secure candles in holders made of glass, ceramic, metal or other noncombustible material.
- Avoid using candles that have combustible materials embedded in them.

## **Take special precaution with gel candles**

Gel candles have become increasingly popular because of their beauty and long-burning characteristics. An eight-ounce gel candle will burn 100 hours or more, increasing the risk for injury and fire beyond that of regular candles.

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