

Candle Fire Safety

A Fire Safety Message from the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control

Guidelines for the safe use and enjoyment of candles.

Candles are generally safe products, but may become hazardous when used improperly or in an unsafe manner. National fire safety agencies report that the bulk of candle fire incidents in the United States are due to consumer inattention to basic fire safety or to the misuse of candles. OFPC recommends the following safety tips when burning candles:

① Candle Preparation

- Read and carefully follow all manufacturer instructions.
- Trim candlewicks to 1/4 inch each time before burning. Long or crooked wicks cause uneven burning and dripping.
- 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. Be sure the candleholder is placed on a stable, heat-resistant surface.

② General Safety

- Always keep a burning candle within your sight. Extinguish all candles when you leave a room or before going to sleep.
- Never burn a candle on or near anything that can catch fire. Keep burning candles away from furniture, drapes, bedding, carpets, books, paper, flammable decorations, etc.
- Keep candles out of the reach of children and pets. Do not place lighted candles where they can be knocked over by children, pets or anyone else.
- Keep burning candles away from drafts, vents and air currents. This will help prevent rapid, uneven burning, smoking and excessive dripping. Drafts can also blow lightweight curtains or papers into the flame where they could catch fire. Ceiling fans can cause drafts.
- Keep the wax pool free of wick trimmings, matches and debris at all times.
- Do not burn a candle for longer than the manufacturer recommends.
- Always burn candles in a well-ventilated room.
- Extinguish the flame if it comes too close to the holder or container. For a margin of safety, discontinue burning a candle when 2 inches of wax remain (1/2 inch if in a container). This will also help prevent possible heat damage to the counter/surface and prevent glass containers from cracking or breaking.
- Never touch or move a votive or container candle when the wax is liquid.
- Extinguish pillar candles if the wax pool approaches the outer edge.
- Candles should be placed at least three inches apart from one another. This is to be sure that they don't melt one another, or create their own drafts that will cause the candles to burn improperly.
- One of the safest ways to extinguish a candle is to use a candle snuffer, which helps prevent hot wax from spattering.



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