

HOME CANDLE FIRES
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My daughter called me one morning, from her apartment in Indianapolis, to inform me that her roommate's cat had jumped up on the table, where a candle was burning and caught his tail on fire. Luckily she was home, and immediately extinguished the fire, saving the cat, except for a portion of his tail, and her apartment. Others are not so lucky. Home candle fires have tripled since the 1990's. Two-fifths of these fires begin in the bedroom, while the living room, family room and den are the leading areas of origin for fatal candle fires. During 2002, candles in U.S. homes caused 18,000 structure fires, 130 deaths, 1,350 injuries and \$333 million in property damage.

Many of us, including myself, enjoy burning candles in our home however there are some tips we need to follow to prevent a fire:

- #1. Place candles on heat resistant surfaces. Candles can become hot enough to melt plastic. Televisions are not fire-resistant.**
- #2. Candles should be placed in a proper holder, which is sturdy and will not fall over. Candles which turn to liquid should be placed in a glass or metal holder.**
- #3. Do not place candles near curtains, or other fabrics, including furniture.**
- #4. Keep candles out of drafty areas.**
- #5. Do not place a candle under a shelf or other surface, or directly against a wall. Make sure there is at least 3 feet between the candle and any surface above it or beside it.**
- #6. Keep your clothes and hair away from the candle.**
- #7. Candles should be out of reach of children and pets.**
- #8. Leave at least 4 inches between 2 burning candles.**
- #9. Do not place a candle near a combustible material.**
- #10. Do not move a candle when it is burning.**
- #11. Extinguish candles before you leave a room.**
- #12. Never go to sleep with a candle burning.**
- #13. Never leave a candle in a child's bedroom.**
- #14. Teach your children fire safety, and educate them not to play with candles.**
- #15. Use a snuffer or a spoon to extinguish a candle. Do not blow out a candle.**
- #16. Double check that a candle is out, as a smouldering candle may start a fire.**

Research for this article was obtained with the assistance of the National Fire Protection Association at www.nfpa.org and from www.firekills.gov.uk.