Candles – Fire Hazards – Safety Tips

By CFA AdminOn February 9, 20260 Comments



🕯️ Candles can create a cozy atmosphere, but they are also a common cause of home fires.

Firefighters recommend:

• Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything flammable

• Never leave candles unattended

• Blow them out before leaving the room or going to sleep

Want more simple ways to reduce fire risks at home?

➡️ Download our Residential Fire Safety Plan today: GwinnettCounty.com/SafetyGuide

Follow these essential safety tips to enjoy your candles responsibly:

(1) Before You Light:

- **Trim the Wick**: Always trim wicks to **1/4 inch** before lighting. This prevents high flames, excessive smoke, and soot buildup.
- **Check the Surface**: Place candles on a **stable, heat-resistant surface**. Avoid plastic or wood that could melt or catch fire.
- **Clear a "Safe Zone"**: Keep candles at least **12 inches** away from anything that can burn, such as curtains, bedding, books, or decorations.
- **Avoid Drafts**: Keep candles away from open windows, fans, or air vents, as drafts can cause the flame to flicker dangerously or blow nearby items into the fire.

(2) While Burning:

- **Never Leave Unattended**: Always keep a burning candle within your line of sight. If you leave the room, **blow it out**.
- **Watch Children and Pets**: Keep candles out of reach of "little hands" and wagging tails. Never leave a child alone with a lit candle.
- **Don't Move Lit Candles**: Never touch or move a candle while the wax is liquid.
- **Space Them Out**: If lighting multiple candles, keep them at least **3 inches apart** to prevent them from melting each other or creating their own drafts.
- **Limit Burn Time**: Do not burn candles for more than **4 hours** at a time to prevent the container from overheating.

(3) Safe Extinguishing :

- **Use a Snuffer**: Using a candle snuffer is the safest way to extinguish a flame and prevents hot wax from splattering.
- **Never Use Water**: Using water to put out a candle can cause hot wax to explode and glass containers to shatter.
- **Know When to Stop**: Stop burning a candle when **1/2 inch** of wax remains in a container (or **2 inches** for pillar candles) to prevent the bottom from getting too hot.
- **Double Check**: Ensure the wick is completely extinguished and no longer glowing before leaving the area.

(4) Safe Alternatives:

- If you have young children, pets, or someone in the home using medical oxygen (which makes flames highly dangerous), consider **battery-operated flameless candles**. They offer the same ambiance and scent without the fire risk.

(5) Safety Tips :

- **"Three-Foot Rule":** Keep candles at least 3 feet away from items that can burn.
- **Extinguish Always:** Blow out all candles when leaving a room or going to bed.
- **Stable Surfaces:** Use sturdy, non-combustible holders on flat surfaces.
- **Trim Wicks:** Keep wicks trimmed to 1/4 inch to prevent high flames.
- **Power Outages:** Use flashlights, not candles, during power outages.
- **Safe Distance:** Keep burning candles at least 3 inches apart from each other.
- **Children/Pets:** Keep matches and lighters out of reach.
- **Avoid Drafts:** Keep away from fans, vents, and open windows.
- **Container Safety:** Stop burning when 2 inches of wax remain, or 1/2 inch for container candles.
- **Consider Alternatives:** Use LED battery-operated candles for safety.